

RACE AND STEREOTYPES IN NEW MEDIA: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW INTERNET  
NEWS FRAMES PERSONS OF COLOR

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## **Abstract**

The portrayal of race in news media has received much attention over the past few decades by scholars. Despite this, no unifying theoretical approach for analysis has been developed or employed. Further, little attention to Internet news has been paid. This dissertation was developed and carried out to address both issues. A content analysis of the top twenty Traditional and Non-Traditional news websites (as ranked by Alexa Media Research), was performed. A sample was collected from one year of news content resulting in a representative composite month for each website. Comparisons to United States Census data and examinations of stereotypic, stereotype-neutral and counter-stereotypic portrayals were conducted.

Results from analyses performed reveal that stereotypes and misrepresentation persist in Internet news. Specifically, Arabs are represented at a rate far greater than one would expect and associated with terrorism. Native Americans are under-represented in comparison to their rate within the U.S. population and stereotyped as gamblers. Latinos are under-represented in comparison to U.S. Census data and are stereotyped in a multitude of negative manners (e.g., migrant workers and undocumented immigrants). Blacks are neither under-nor-over represented in comparison to their rate within the U.S. population, however are the most stereotyped group within the sample (e.g., crime, welfare, or drugs). When including presentations of Barack and Michelle Obama, Blacks see marginally more representations, however are still heavily stereotyped. Asians avoid socially problematic stereotypes and are associated with technology and science, while being under-represented in comparison to Census data. Whites, on the other hand, are portrayed in a balanced manner, over-represented in comparison to Census data. Non-Traditional news websites were found to be larger purveyors of such stereotypes. Finally, *Top* and *Popular* news sections within each site were found to contain especially stereotypic

presentations. These findings are situated within a new *Model of Racial Representation*, born out of effects based research. This model suggests a *state* of representation for each group such that Native Americans and Asians are *neglected*; Blacks, Arabs and Latinos are in a state of *imbalance*, while Whites are in a state of *symmetry*. The utility and implications of the model scholarship are discussed. Limitations and potential directions for future research are explained in light of this dissertation's findings.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Following the election of President Barack Obama in 2008 many lay scholars and media pundits alike proclaimed that America had largely achieved its vision of equality for persons of color (Lum, 2009). The election of America's first Black president and first lady surely provided *proof* for the average citizen that the US had entered a new era. Dubbed by theorists and advocates as the post-racial society, a markedly different era of race relations was supposed to be seen (2009). However, much like the eras that preceded it, this post-racial society has seen that its institutions did often not match its ideals.

In 2012 a 17-year-old African American high school student, Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by a neighborhood watch member in Florida for looking suspicious while walking down the street (Robles, 2012). In 2014, Michael Brown, an 18-yr-old Black man was fatally shot by a White Police officer in Ferguson, Missouri after being stopped without sufficient cause by the officer (Clarke, 2014). In both of these incidents the victim was young, Black, and unarmed. In July of 2014 Eric Garner, a middle-aged Black male was approached by police in New York with no provocation. An altercation ensued which ultimately led to the death of Garner at the hands of an NYPD officer who choked him (Goodman, 2014). Each of these high profile incidents resulted in extensive coverage by the mass media. Further, each incident was followed by a series of protests or unrest due to the elements of racial profiling suffered by the victims that resulted in their deaths. In each case little to no punishment was ultimately handed out to the perpetrators of each murder. As a result, news outlets and social media were inundated with opinions and stories staking opinions on the level of appropriateness of police actions and the dangers of simply being a Black male in public. Tragedies like the ones in New York, Ferguson and the case involving Trayvon Martin remind us of how racial difference and



stereotyping deeply affect and polarize much of our country. These cases bring with them the reminder that in the US and world-wide race still very much matters and that racial difference is still being perpetuated at many societal levels.

### **Modern Understandings of Race as Genetically Indicated**

Traditional scholarship on race has treated any distinction made along racial lines as one that is largely based on outward physical appearance (Hall, 1980; Van Dijk, 1996; Wilkinson & King, 1987). Here physical appearance is used by a super-ordinate group to mark any marginalized group as different, as Omi and Winant (1994) note, *othering* entire groups based upon perceived difference. The fact that hegemonic groups employ physical difference to delineate between themselves and *others* has been deemed highly problematic to society. Here relying on physical identifiers such as hair/eye/skin color or other physical attributes is assumed to be the true and best way to classify a person's racial heritage (Wilkinson & King, 1987). Any person finding himself distinguished as belonging to the out-group often finds that he is the victim of inequity (Hall, 1980). The problem is that relying on phenotypical indicators for classifying groups into racial categories is tenuous in its accuracy and arbitrary in its application (Wilkinson & King, 1987). By relying on physical indicators to attempt these classifications, governments and scholars alike perpetuate wide-sweeping beliefs about what a group should *look like*. This ultimately leads to pernicious effects in both research and society at large. Whether it is the United States Census or self-affiliation, determining one's race is a tricky inaccurate endeavor.

Modern race scholarship benefits from advances in genetic mapping of race that may supplant arbitrary practices of delineating race based upon outward physical characteristics. In 2001 the Human Genome project announced that it had mapped over 95 percent of the total

human genetic makeup (Venter et al., 2001). For the first time in recorded history, it was possible to map human DNA fully and probe for differences between groups of individuals based upon area of origin. This would allow scientists to definitively account for outward manifestations of difference by tracing phenotypical indicators back to their original regional populace (2001). At last scholars had the tools to determine whether race did exist in a meaningful and genetic level (Sellers et al., 2006). Within a few years of the research by Venter and colleagues (2001) the entire human genome had been analyzed with enough specificity to determine regional origin for any group of people. On the individual level this meant that genetic testing could indeed identify lineage to particular parts of the world. This in turn took scholars one-step closer to having definitive data when examining the race of an individual or group of persons. Here race is indicated by the continental region with which a person or group shows genetic heritage. This can be mapped to very specific regions within a country or continent, giving racial categories a whole new level of specificity. Applying this to old notions of how to demarcate race means that scholars now have the ability to link outward phenotypic indicators such as eye/skin/hair color to unique genetic markers found in specific geographic regions. In essence, scholars now have a map to decode a person's exact racial makeup, explaining the outward manifestation of racial difference (2006).

These developments led to a heightened awareness of a person or group's shared heritage. This in turn is reflected in mass media coverage of such issues. Programs such as *Finding Your Roots*, a PBS show starring Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates use a mixture of archival records and genetics to help explain to guests of the show more about their exact racial makeup (Miller, 2014). Although such shows use a combined approach to help society and individuals *understand* race while attempting to genetically codify it, they and their methods are

not without controversy. McAndrew (2008) cautions against the wholesale use of genetics as an indicator of a person's race. Pointing out a sizeable group of geneticists' and scientists' objections to the most common testing methods, McAndrew (2008) notes that relying on one DNA map of a person's race can rarely account for the entire makeup of their genetic lineage. This is because the two most often used screening methods rely upon tracing ancestry using only the Y or X chromosome. Fullwiley (2008) notes that such methods often account for only a small portion of one's ancestry and thus may prove of little utility for determining a person or group's race. Regardless of whether genetics ultimately provide scholars and lay persons with a complete roadmap of a person or group's racial heritage, scholars do agree that the important strides in correlating outward physical indicators to genetic code are important to understanding difference.

### **Making Meaning of Race**

Given the remarkable progress made by the Human Genome Project in understanding the relationship between geographic heritage and phenotypical indicators of race, one might assume that scholars are well on their way to figuring out racial categorization. However, a simple understanding of how genetics result in physical difference is insufficient to understand the racialization and the stereotyping that result from physical difference. Sellers and colleagues (2006) note that racial discrimination and stereotyping have tangible physical and psychological effects on persons of color. As such, scholars of race should be less concerned with the physical manifestation of race and more concerned with how meaning is attributed to phenotypical indicators. It is here that *difference* results in stereotypes about a group. These stereotypes in turn can create racial prejudice that can lead to racism and discrimination.

The meanings attached to phenotypic difference among groups are constructed at a sociological level. The subordination of one group of individuals by another happens via a largely broad categorization of individuals by those in power and is perpetuated at a societal level (Hall, 1980). While race may be sociologically constructed, the meaning attached to it results in very real psychological and behavioral outcomes. Many scholars argue that race has such pervasive influences in our social world that it should be placed at the forefront of academic inquiry using all of science's methodological tools to investigate its pernicious effects (Hall, 1980; Josey, 2010; Omi & Winant, 1994; Bonilla-Silva, 1999, 1997). For these scholars, the racialization of a group represents one of the most insidious forms of human activity, and to study the process of racialization is to bring to light the structural, psychological and social means that allow it to perpetuate itself (Kim, 2000). One means of studying the process of how racial meanings are communicated is to investigate how individuals of a particular racial group are portrayed in popular entertainment and news content. The latter form of content is the subject matter of this dissertation.

### **Studies of Race in Media**

Past analyses of the framing of race in the Mass Media have largely focused on the area of television (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; 2000b). Specifically news programming on television has been studied as it is an important locus of information that viewers might take to represent an accurate portrayal of the world around them (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1980). Prior analyses have found that the portrayal of race in television news distorts reality often associating persons of color with socially problematic issues (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Entman, 1990, 1992). This, in turn, can have a multitude of deleterious effects in the way individuals perceive and treat persons of color on a day-to-day basis. While much research has

explored the portrayal of race in traditional media, little work has examined this content in the new media environment. The few studies that have examined Internet-based content have not examined more than a handful of websites or have ignored websites that have no offline counterpart (e.g., The Daily Beast). They also suffer from a lack of sufficient sample size to be truly generalizable, fail to probe for stereotype valence, and lack a coherent theoretical framework for making sense of the overall portrayal of race in Internet news (Josey et al., 2010; Melican & Dixon, 2008). This dissertation seeks to remedy such limitations.

**The impetus for studying online news.** This dissertation examines the portrayal of persons of color in Internet news stories. To understand why such a study is needed, it is first necessary to understand news consumption in the modern era. Research has found that more than 92 million Americans spend some time consuming information on the Internet in a typical day (Raine & Shermack, 2005). While academics have studied traditional media with great rigor, they have unfortunately been relatively slow to apply the same level of nuance to the Internet. Yet with over 3.1 billion Internet users in over 171 countries worldwide, it is crucial for scholars to bring this same level of nuance to this new medium quickly (Internet Usage Stats, 2014; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000). It is possible that new media echo prior media forms such as television news. However, it is also possible that Internet news diverges from traditional news outlets in important ways. Josey et al. (2010) found evidence partially supporting both notions. Given this important distinction, it is imperative for research to explicate possible differences as a Pew (2000) study found that Internet news is being consumed at an increasing pace. The Pew Internet and American Life Study (2000) have found that the Internet has had two distinct effects on traditional information outlets (specifically news outlets): A general loss of traditional news habit and a greater attraction to the Internet as a primary source of information (Pew, 2000).

This dissertation is designed to bridge mass media research, race research, and new media research by examining the portrayals of race in Internet news stories from the most consumed news outlets online. Given the fact that prior research demonstrates that individuals are overwhelmingly turning to Internet news outlets over older media forms, it is imperative to examine the content contained therein. It is argued here and later that examining such portrayals aids us in understanding how the construction of racial stereotypes remains, despite claims of a *post racial* era in the US. Although this dissertation cannot explicitly address the exact effects of such content, it will fully explicate the content contained in these stories. It will also advance a novel framework for understanding racialized portrayals in Internet news. In doing so, this dissertation fulfills the call of many scholars to first *understand* content before attempting to gauge effects.

## **Overview of Chapter One**

This chapter will primarily introduce relevant theory for understanding the content of Internet news and potential effects it may have. Another aim of this chapter is to explicitly lay out the goals this dissertation is designed to achieve. Chapter Two in this document fully details the extant literature surrounding the study of race in all forms of news media. It will highlight deficiencies in the existing body of knowledge and lay out the need for the current analysis. Chapter Three will fully explain all theory relevant in the execution of this dissertation. It will explain the strengths of each theory, their weaknesses, and ultimately lay the foundation for the advancement of a new comprehensive *Model of Racial Representation*. The fourth chapter advances research questions left unanswered by prior research. It will also advance hypotheses that were derived from the theories presented in Chapter Two. The methods used in performing this content analysis are fully laid out in Chapter Five along with the rationale behind them.

Chapter Six will fully detail the major findings, highlighting the ways they confirm or fail to support the stated hypotheses. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings (Chapter Seven) as a whole in light of the proposed *Model of Racial Representation*. Chapter Seven will also provide scholars with suggestions for future research, providing final comments from the author.

### **Theoretical Constructs and Contributions**

This dissertation will examine the portrayal of race in Internet news media by introducing a new theoretical model that is born out of prior content and effects theories: Clark's stages of minority representation, the Cultivation Hypothesis, and Social Identity theory. Each of these provides important theoretical underpinnings for the current dissertation and proves useful in the understanding of the portrayal of race in Internet news. Below, Clark's (1972) stages are briefly introduced. In Chapter Three of this manuscript the effects theories are fully detailed prior to introducing the new *Model of Racial Representation*.

**Clark's Stages of Minority Representation.** Prior content studies have relied on varying theoretical tools to explain racialized media content. In entertainment media, scholars have used Clark's (1972) stages of minority representation to explain how racial groups (usually Blacks) have been represented in the media. In traditional news media scholars have used ethnic blame discourse as an explanatory mechanism (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). In studies of racialized Internet news, Josey et al. (2010) attempted to extend and improve upon Clark's (1972) stages by integrating ethnic blame discourse as an explanatory mechanism. Despite the good work that has been done in detailing and explaining racialized content, no theoretical tool has been consistently implemented to account for all racialized representations across media forms. This dissertation remedies that by advancing a

new *Model of Racial Representation* (detailed in subsequent chapters). For now it is necessary to briefly introduce the original formulation of Clark's (1972) stages model noting its various shortcomings which give rise to a new theoretical approach.

**Overview of Clark's Stages.** Cedric Clark (1972) advanced that racial groups are at any one time in one of four stages of representation in the media. As a racial group gains greater acceptance in US culture, they move further along these stages towards equal and fair representation. Clark (1972) theorized that in entertainment media, minority groups can be categorized as being in one of four stages of representation in the media: non-recognition, ridicule, regulation, and respect. Each stage corresponds to an increasingly fair and balanced level of portrayal through which all minority groups proceed.

**Non-Recognition.** Clark (1972) describes the first stage of representation as one of non-recognition. In this stage, groups are largely absent from media content, or as Clark describes them, *invisible*. Specifically, they make up a very small percentage of the overall characters or images in media content. While groups may achieve some level of visibility, it is usually in a novel fashion (1972). An example of a group in this stage is Native Americans. Native Americans are rarely seen in media coverage, appearing in stories about gambling and cultural festivals (Ganje, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

**Ridicule.** The second stage of representation is known as ridicule. In this stage, racial groups clearly gain more visibility than those in the non-recognition phase. However, they are often seen in a highly stereotypic or degrading fashion. Most often the hallmarks of ridicule are characters in entertainment who are shown as buffoons with one-dimensional personalities. Examples of this abound in the early portrayals of African Americans in entertainment. Blacks



were shown as slapstick clowns, brutes, and mammies (Abraham, 2003; Ross, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

**Regulation.** Regulation is the third stage theorized by Clark (1972). In this stage, racial groups are seen with greater frequency and are more common as characters or prominent images. Yet despite having largely escaped the highly stereotypic portrayals or buffoon images, groups in this stage are portrayed in limited roles or as non-prominent characters whose back-stories are rarely detailed. Clark sees evidence of this stage when the media constrains a group to certain mildly stereotypic categories or character tropes (1972). An example of groups in the regulation phase are African Americans. In entertainment this manifests itself such that Blacks are portrayed largely as police officers or judges in programs (Abraham, 2003; Josey et al., 2010; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

**Respect.** The final stage of representation put forth by Clark (1972) is that of respect. When a group enters the respect phase they are portrayed in a balanced and nuanced manner. Here, racial groups are equally likely to be seen in any type of entertainment role. Thus, the group is shown in a diverse and accurate manner, representing the true heterogeneity that actually exists in that race. Most scholars agree that no historically subordinated minority group in the United States has achieved stage four (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003). Rather, scholars have found that only Whites appear to achieve representation within this stage (Josey et al., 2010).

**Shortcomings of Clark's approach.** Despite the utility of Clark's stages model, some scholars (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2013) have noted that it has several critical shortcomings. These shortcomings will be briefly identified here and fully explicated as pertinent to this study in Chapter Two. This will ultimately demonstrate the apparent need for

fresh theorizing regarding the portrayal and characterization of racial representation in the mass media.

Clark's stages model presents an interesting starting point for scholars to begin to understand each group's representation in the greater mass media. Clark (1972) originally formulated his stages through a government-funded study to investigate the portrayals of African Americans in entertainment media. It was not until decades later that his model was applied to other media forms or groups (Josey et al., 2010). Unfortunately, despite the ability of this model to accurately categorize the portrayal of African Americans during early era entertainment programming, its utility is greatly diminished when applied to modern media forms and races beyond African Americans.

First, Clark developed his model with a singular focus on a steady linear progression from non-recognition to respect (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010). This was born out of an optimistic view of one race's gains in fair portrayals during the era he conducted his research (Giles, 2003). Unfortunately even using the optimistic lens Clark employed, this approach falls short. It assumes that once a group reaches a more advanced stage (e.g., regulation or respect), that it cannot move backward to a previous stage. Studies (Devine & Elliot, 1995) have shown that racial representations are not always static. Stereotypes can and do change for groups (1995). Events and cultural shifts can create conditions under which a race may become more stereotyped than in previous times (e.g., 9/11 and Arabs). This fluidity of circumstances and traits that could cause any group to move from one stage of representation (e.g., regulation) to a less advanced one (e.g., ridicule), runs contrary to one of the basic premises of Clark's stages model. Consequently any model must account for a group's representation being more fluid in nature.

Second, Clark was overly focused on one group's (Black's) representation in entertainment media and as such, the various characterizations of each stage he presents are not equally applicable to the many racial groups present in the US and how they are presented in the mass media (Josey et al., 2010). Third, many scholars believe that Clark's stages may actually be more relevant for the examination of news coverage than entertainment (Giles, 2003). Fourth, Clark does a great job creating stages for his model; however, the specifics of each stage, what it looks like, and delineating factors are sparsely mentioned in his original or follow-up manuscripts (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010).

Lastly, as originally formulated, Clark's stages model does little to provide any meaningful and testable propositions for media effects scholars. Although understanding the content of racialized portrayals is important, media scholars should ultimately seek to understand the effects of these portrayals, as it is there that the real pernicious work is done. The *Model of Racial Representation* advanced in Chapters Three, Six, and Seven of this manuscript fulfills such an aim. Much of the proposed *Model of Racial Representation* detailed later in this manuscript is derived from effects-based research. As such, in Chapter Three of this manuscript the most pertinent effects-based theories will be fully detailed, with attention to their utility to the proposed model.

## **Research Goals**

This dissertation is designed to achieve several goals. The first goal of this dissertation is to extend prior content analyses' findings regarding the portrayal of race in the mass media. Prior analyses of the portrayal of race in news and entertainment have demonstrated that minorities are represented in highly problematic ways (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Dixon & Josey 2013; Entman, 1994, 1993, 1992; Josey et al., 2010). However, racial portrayals are fluid

and might appear differently in the modern era. As such, this study examines whether the problematic portrayals of persons of color observed in earlier television news studies and preliminary internet investigations holds true in the years following the election of the first Black US president. It will also probe for any demonstrable effect that the president and first lady have on the overall racialization of African Americans in the media by juxtaposing analyses including and excluding both.

The second and most significant goal of the present study is to use a content-driven approach to develop a comprehensive *Model of Racial Representation*. This model accounts for the shortcomings in Clark's (1972) stages. It does this by broadening the scope of consideration to include all media representations, not limiting itself to news or entertainment. Further it will seek to fully explicate the conditions for delineating categories in a manner that is exhaustive and mutually exclusive. This will ultimately result in a grounded theory which is applicable to multiple racial groups which can in turn be used by future scholars to track the state of racialization more easily in any given medium or era. Because the proposed model will be more explicit in criteria for categorization, it opens up the possibility for it to be a useful tool for effects scholars. Effects-based scholarship will inform the creation of the model and make it of much utility for scholars in determining the ultimate effect of content on media consumers.

Third, the current analysis furthers the work of scholars such as Josey et al. (2010) in their initial analysis of Internet news. Due to the nature of Internet news and the rate at which individuals are flocking to it, it is imperative that scholars understand the content that is being consumed by news viewers in this new medium (Dixon & Josey 2013; Josey, 2010; Josey et al., 2010; Pew, 2000). Prior research has demonstrated that there are significant differences in expressed racial attitudes between consumers of traditional versus non-traditional news sources

(Melican & Dixon, 2008). As such, it is important to probe for any content difference which may be online. Although some initial analyses have been conducted in the world of Internet news by Josey et al. (2010), their analysis was limited by both sample size (e.g., limited number of stories) and units of analysis (e.g., websites and levels considered). This dissertation remedies this problem by analyzing the twenty most visited Traditional and Non-Traditional news websites, probing for possible content differences. In doing so, a greater understanding of Internet news overall will be gained along with a nuanced interpretation of the differences that exist among these sites in their treatment of persons of color.

Finally this dissertation expands our understanding of the portrayal of persons of color beyond the narrow paradigms with which prior analyses have used to investigate them (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Dixon & Josey, 2013; Entman, 1994, 1992; Josey et al., 2010). Prior analyses have typically limited themselves by examining socially problematic issues associated with persons of color while failing to account for things that could be deemed counter-stereotypic. Dixon and Josey (2013) note that most analyses to date have examined largely negative issues of ethnic blame associated with persons of color (e.g., Blacks/Crime, Latinos/Immigration and Arabs/Terrorism). What this misses is that there are other problematic issues beyond the ones studied by prior work that may plague persons of color in the media (e.g., Blacks/Welfare). Further, by analyzing news content on an issue-by-issue basis for each group rather than holistically, it precludes the possibility for meaningful analysis of counter-stereotypic representations (e.g., African American CEO's). Given that there is a distinct possibility of such representations in the diverse Internet news setting following the election of President Obama, it is critical to account for such representations.

It has been posited by some that we now live in a *post racial* society (Lum, 2009). However scholarship in the area of race and news media has clearly shown that race still *matters* (Josey, 2010; Josey et al., 2010; Lum, 2009). Portrayals of persons of color may be changing or even improving for some groups (Josey et al., 2010), however the pernicious stigmatization of persons of color is far from gone. Through this dissertation, a more complete and detailed understanding of how messages regarding race are framed will be gleaned. Understanding how race is framed in Internet news represents an important first step in learning how stereotypes are perpetuated in a supposed *post racial* world.

## **Chapter Two: The Portrayal of Race in News**

The consumption of news and entertainment media by individuals has been a highly studied area of communication by scholars for many years (Campbell, 2005). Both critical and quantitative scholars acknowledge that the consumption of media can have important effects on individuals' attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (Campbell, 2005; Severin & Tankard, 2001). These effects have been examined across a variety of contexts and in numerous media forms (2005). One important locus of investigation by scholars is the content and effects of news media on individuals who consume it. Scholars have studied the content and effects of news coverage in a wide variety of contexts ranging from media violence (Gerbner et al., 1986) to evaluation of political candidates (Valentino, 1999). One important area of study that scholars have examined is the portrayal of racial minority groups in news content (Dixon, 2006a, 2006b; Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Entman, 1992, 1994; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Gilliam, Iyengar, Simon, & Wright, 1996; Johnson & Dixon, 2008; Josey et al., 2010; Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). Though scholars have learned much about the portrayal of race across media, research on racial minority groups in news has largely been evaluated using America's historically largest racial minority group: African Americans (Josey et al., 2010).

### **Chapter Overview**

Chapter One of this dissertation introduced the overall goals of this study. It briefly overviewed the theoretical and methodological nature of the current study, while providing a clear rationale for studying the portrayal of race in Internet news media. This chapter (Chapter Two) provides a comprehensive overview of what we know about the problematic portrayals of persons of color. Further, this chapter lays out clearly what has been understudied by scholars. In order to achieve these two goals this chapter provides a review of the extant literature. I will

begin by offering a comprehensive overview of what is known about the portrayal of persons of color in news media, in all its forms. Further, I will explain how the media depict each racial group in often problematic manners and roles. Next, because racialized content can, and does, have deleterious effects on news consumers, I will briefly examine the major effects-based studies found in the extant literature. This will pave the way for an integration of effects-based research into a content analytic theory or, *Model of Racial Representation*, advanced in subsequent chapters of this manuscript. I will conclude this chapter by examining the most notable voids in scholarly literature of race in news programming, pointing ultimately to the impetus for this dissertation.

### **Review of Content Analytic Studies of Race and News**

This review details the ways in which racial minority groups have been portrayed in the news media, noting the effects observed in experimental and survey studies. To accomplish this aim, it is necessary to begin by examining the work performed by content analysts over the past few decades. One could categorize content analytic findings on many dimensions (e.g., medium or methods). I will proceed by examining each racial group's portrayal, noting the three primary means of analyses that scholars have used to shed light on their overall portrayal. In particular, three types of comparisons have been used by scholars: Inter-group, Inter-role, and Inter-reality. Further, I will distinguish the main roles these analyses illuminated for each group. As will become evident, the bulk of content analytic work in this area is limited to televised news and focuses on the difference in portrayals between Whites and African Americans.

### **Types of Comparisons Used by Scholars in Content Analytic Work**

In understanding each racial group's portrayal in news programming, it is first useful to understand the types of comparisons scholars use when examining content. Traditionally, there



have been three types of comparisons used by scholars when studying how minorities are portrayed: Inter-group, Inter-role, and Inter-reality. Each comparison tells us something unique about how groups are seen by media consumers. Additionally, each racial group examined below and in Chapters Six and Seven of this dissertation, will be understood using these analytical tools, among others. Inter-group comparisons refer to contrasting one racial group to another on any variable of interest (e.g., Blacks vs. Whites as criminal suspects). Inter-Role comparisons refer to contrasting within a racial group, all of the various roles they may occupy (e.g., Blacks as police officers vs. criminal suspects). Inter-Reality comparisons are when scholars examine specific portrayals in news (e.g., Black criminal suspects) to other indices of reality (e.g., FBI Uniform Crime Report Data). Each of these comparisons reveals important things about the portrayal of persons of color in the media. I will now examine recent content analyses of Blacks in news within this framework, then move on to consider analyses of Latinos and other marginalized groups.

### **Portrayal of African Americans in News**

Early content analytic studies examining the portrayal of race focused on African Americans as compared to Whites (an Inter-group comparison). The vast majority of content analyses have focused on local television news (Dixon, Azocar & Casas, 2003). Studies funded by the US government found that less than 2% of televised news was devoted to minority portrayals (Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002). In a series of oft-cited and foundational work examining the portrayal of race in local television news, Entman (1990, 1992) found that Blacks were disproportionately associated with issues of crime or social deviance. In the Chicago area, Entman (1990, 1992) found that more than half of all news stories portrayed Blacks as violent criminals. Similarly, Blacks were portrayed in manners that dehumanized them as a racial group

(e.g., handcuffed, restrained, or unnamed). Entman (1994) found similar, but more pronounced patterns of these portrayals in network news. These early studies highlighted the importance of comparing one group to another on some variable of interest (e.g., Inter-group comparisons). I will now fully detail Inter-group findings for African Americans in news programming.

**Inter-group comparisons of Blacks in the news.** Early studies relied on Inter-group comparisons or looking at how Blacks were represented when compared to Whites on some variable of interest. Most commonly this variable of interest involved crime portrayals. Entman (1990, 1992) found that Blacks were significantly more likely than Whites to be portrayed as criminal suspects, unnamed and handcuffed when featured in television crime stories. Additionally, Entman found this held true for network news as well (1994). Romer, Jamieson, and DeCoteau (1998) found that Blacks are significantly more likely than Whites to be associated with acts of crime. However, this difference failed to emerge in non-crime stories (1998). Gilliam and colleagues (1996, 2000) found that Blacks are more likely than Whites to be portrayed as violent and dangerous criminals. Dixon and Linz (2000a) found that Blacks are significantly more likely than other racial groups to be portrayed as law-breakers. Further, Blacks were significantly less likely than other racial groups to be portrayed as police officers (2000a). Dixon and Linz (2000b) also found that Blacks are less likely than whites to be seen as victims of crime. However, Dixon, Azocar, and Casas (2003) did not find Blacks portrayed at a rate higher than Whites when doing intergroup comparisons of perpetrators, victims, and police officers on network news.

In other areas of content, Dixon and Linz (2002) examined local news programming's reporting of information about criminal suspects and crimes prior to trial that may unfairly influence potential jurors (e.g., prejudicial pretrial information). They found that Blacks were

more likely to be associated with prejudicial pretrial information in local newscasts than Whites at a rate of almost two-to-one. The previously mentioned studies all largely dealt with adult suspects in news. In an analysis of juvenile offenders in Los Angeles area newscasts, Dixon and Azocar (2006) found that Blacks were more likely than Whites to be portrayed as perpetrators.

**Inter-role comparisons of the ways Blacks are portrayed.** Inter-role comparisons are when a researcher examines the available roles a group can occupy and compares which one a group occupies the most. For example, Dixon and Linz (2000a) found that Blacks are more likely to be seen in crime stories as perpetrators of crime than as police officers. They also found that Blacks are more likely to be seen as perpetrators of crime than victims of it (2000b). This finding also holds true for network news where Blacks are more likely to be seen as perpetrators of crime and less likely as victims and police officers (Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003).

**Inter-reality comparisons of Blacks to indices of reality.** Attempting to make meaningful comparisons to reality, several studies have tried to make extensive comparisons between news portrayals and actual crime statistics. In an analysis of Los Angeles area newspapers, Sorenson, Manz, and Berk (1998) found that Blacks and Latinos were less likely to be portrayed as victims of homicide than expected when compared to actual homicide rates. In their investigation, Whites were found to receive more coverage as victims (1998). Similarly, Romer, Jamieson, and DeCateau (1998) found that Blacks were over-represented as perpetrators of crime, while under represented as victims of crime when compared to other indices of reality.

More recently, Dixon and Linz (2000a; 2000b) found that when compared to other indices of reality, Blacks were more likely to be shown as perpetrators of crime in television news than what crime reports indicate is actually the case. However, when comparing news portrayals to reality Blacks were more likely to be portrayed as perpetrators of crime when

compared to actual crime reports, but were neither over nor under represented as police officers (2000a). Inter-reality comparisons revealed that Blacks were more likely to be seen as perpetrators than their actual rate of arrest in California. They were neither under, nor over represented as victims (2000b). These trends largely held in an analysis of network news (Dixon, Azocar & Casas, 2003). Specifically, Blacks were underrepresented as police officers and victims of violent crime when compared to official records. Finally, Black juveniles were found to be overrepresented as lawbreakers in Los Angeles area news when compared to arrest reports from the area (Dixon & Azocar, 2006).

In a more recent content analysis of the portrayal of race in Internet news, Josey, Dixon, and Hurley (2010) assessed the most frequently visited online news websites. They found that Blacks were under-represented in the most popular and top rated stories when compared to US Census data. Further, they found that Blacks were underrepresented in images associated with online news stories. As characters, Blacks were underrepresented when compared to population data in news stories, yet more likely than any other racial group to be associated with issues of crime. Echoing this partial change in the coverage of Blacks is the most recent content analysis examining the portrayals of Blacks in network and cable news (Dixon & Williams, 2015).

Dixon & Williams (2015) examined four years (e.g., 2008-2012) of network and cable news. They specifically examined crime news stories to see whether trends observed in prior analyses (Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003) still held true. They found that unlike prior analyses, in recent news programming, Blacks are nearly invisible in crime news (2015). Specifically, Blacks were severely under-represented, when compared to actual crime data, as perpetrators of crimes. This was true for both cable and network programming.

Taken together the extant literature on the portrayal of Blacks in print, television, and online news stories paints a bleak picture. Specifically, Blacks have been overrepresented as criminals, have been underrepresented in general as characters, and are more likely to be seen as the perpetrators of violent crimes. This general pattern holds true regardless of the medium (e.g., television or print), program reach (e.g., local or network) or comparisons used (i.e., interrole, intergroup, interreality). While the preponderance of evidence sees this trend hold true, the two most recent analyses of Blacks in news (Dixon & Williams, 2015; Josey et al., 2010) find subtle changes in the ways Blacks are portrayed. Specifically, Blacks have been seen as underrepresented in Internet, cable, and network televised news. These studies may appear as signs of progress in racial representation for Blacks. However, the fact that Dixon and Williams (2015) only looked at traditional race/crime stories and the fact that Josey et al. (2010) found that Blacks were still associated with socially problematic issues hints that African American portrayals have not achieved balance quite yet.

**Unanswered questions.** Despite what we know about the portrayal of Blacks in the news, there is still much to be learned. First, most of what we know comes from studies done on crime news. It is possible and likely that there are many different stereotypes (e.g., Welfare Queen) that are present, yet not accounted for because of the focus of prior studies on crime. Second, little is known about the problematic portrayals of Black females. Lastly, it is possible that the election of President Obama has altered the overall portrayal of Blacks in news somehow; prior analyses do not account for such a watershed moment. This study takes these deficiencies, among others, into account and explicates how Blacks are portrayed in all forms of news. However, according to recent census statistics, Blacks are no longer the largest non-White racial/ethnic group in the United States, having recently been passed numerically in the overall

population by those self-identifying as Latino. As such, it is necessary to review the portrayal of Latinos by news outlets.

### **Portrayals of Latinos in the News**

Latinos as a racial group have received far less attention compared to Blacks across media types and genres (Greenberg, Mastro & Brand, 2002). Analyses of Latinos have repeatedly found that they are seen more in serious news stories (Turk et al, 1989). Further they are most often associated with stories involving crime and immigration (1989). Still others have found that Latinos are relegated to stories involving crime or cultural festivals (Heider, 2000). To understand the nuance in these portrayals we again return to the three primary analyses performed by scholars.

**Inter-group comparisons for Latinos.** Inter-group comparisons for Latinos follow a similar pattern to those found for African Americans. While findings are more robust for Latinos than other non-Black racial groups, they are more limited than those of Whites and African Americans (Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002). In several of the first studies to include Latinos for analysis in news programming, Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) discovered that Latinos, when compared to Whites were far less likely to be seen as the victims of crime stories. While Latinos were more likely than Whites to be shown as perpetrators of crime in news stories, they were less likely to be shown as upholding the law (e.g., police officer portrayals). Sorenson et al. (1998) report similar findings in their study of LA Times homicide reports, whereby Latinos were significantly less likely than Whites to be seen as the victims of crime featured in stories. Moving beyond the victim/perpetrator paradigm, Poindexter et al. (2003) found that Latinos were significantly less likely than Whites to be interviewed by television reporters in stories regarding crime victims. Further, when looking at television news professionals within these

broadcasts, Latinos were far less likely than Whites to be reporting on crime news (2003). In other areas of news coverage, Dixon and Azocar (2006) found that Latino juveniles were portrayed in a manner similar to adults. They found that Latinos youths were more likely than Whites to be shown as lawbreakers. Lastly, Dixon and Linz (2002) found that in news stories, Latinos were more likely than Whites to have prior instances of criminality mentioned as part of the coverage. Taken together, these findings indicate that Latinos receive significantly less desirable coverage in crime news than do Whites.

**Inter-Role comparisons of Latinos.** Compared to Inter-group or Inter-reality analyses of Latinos, Inter-role comparisons are fewer in number. Dixon and Linz (2000a) found that Latinos were significantly more likely to be shown as perpetrators of crime than as police officers. Further, Dixon and Linz (2000b) found that Latinos were more likely to be shown as criminal suspects than victims of crime. In a more recent analysis, Josey et al, (2010) found that Latinos were more likely to be associated with illegal immigration than any other issue (e.g., crime/terrorism). Taken together, these findings indicate that Latinos are far more likely to occupy roles within news content that paint them in a socially problematic manner (Dixon & Josey, 2013). Yet it may be the case that Latinos simply occupy these roles as a reflection of their overall rate in reality. As such, it is necessary to consider scholarly examinations using Inter-reality comparisons.

**Inter-reality comparisons for Latinos.** The earliest work using Inter-reality tests was conducted using local newspapers. In her analysis of print news in Los Angeles, Sorenson and colleagues (1998) found that Latinos were significantly less likely to be covered as victims of homicide when compared to actual homicide data from LA County. When contrasted to the over-representation of other groups, this hints at the notion that Latinos may be chronically

under-represented in news overall. Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) also found that this seems to be the case. In local television news, Latinos were less likely to appear as criminals, police officers, or victims than crime data or employment records would otherwise indicate (2000a, 2000b). Similar trends have been observed for Latino juveniles, as well (Dixon & Azocar, 2006). Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) relied on Los Angeles area broadcasts of local news to demonstrate this pattern. However, others (Poindexter et al., 2003) have found similar trends using a geographically diverse sample of local news broadcasts.

In a more recent study, Dixon and Williams extend these findings to network and cable news programming (2015). In their content analysis of cable and local news programming, Dixon and Williams (2015) found that Latinos were represented as immigrants at a rate of nearly double what Department of Homeland Security statistics say is the case (e.g., 97% Television vs 47% DHS statistic). More troubling was that when compared to the actual undocumented immigrant rate (75%) observed by Pew Research, Latinos were portrayed as being undocumented immigrants by network and cable news at a significantly higher rate accounting for ninety-nine percent of all portrayals of undocumented immigrants (Dixon & Williams, 2015). This is important because it portrays Latinos not only as not citizens, but also as undocumented criminals, making them susceptible to being victims of Ethnic Blame for societal problems (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Josey et al., 2010).

Another study conducted by Josey et al. (2010) found evidence that Latinos are underrepresented when compared to US Census data in online news outlets as both characters in stories and in the images associated with them. In the most consumed and top news stories, Latinos were significantly under represented. Further, when represented, Latinos were portrayed in highly stereotypic manners such as undocumented immigrants (2010). Other studies have



shown that powerful stereotypic associations between illegal immigration and Latinos dominate news coverage (Turk, Richstad, Bryson, & Johnson, 1989). This again points to powerful racialized scripts that news outlets rely on when constructing news stories.

**The upshot of Latinos in news.** Taken together, studies examining the portrayal of Latinos in news programming find similar but different methods of ethnic blame and racialization to that seen for Blacks. In general, Latinos are severely underrepresented when compared to crime and population rates. However when they are seen in stories, they are likely to be portrayed in ways consistent with centuries-old stereotypes of criminality or undocumented immigration. Much like with prior studies done examining the portrayal of Blacks, much of the study of Latinos has revolved around a single or a few issues (e.g., crime and immigrations). In addition, prior studies have not examined gender differences in crime news coverage so not much is known currently about Latina portrayals in the news. This study remedies these problems by employing a diverse coding scheme and sample. It illuminates the ways Latinos are problematically portrayed in news media. It also examines all major racial groups cataloged by the US Census. As such I now will detail the portrayal of Whites in the news.

### **Portrayals of Whites in the News**

As the largest racial group in the United States, Whites occupy a place of privilege and power in both the physical and mediated world (Clark, 1972; Lipsitz, 1998). Some authors maintain that in the US, we have a *possessive investment in whiteness* (1998). As such, one would expect to see Whites portrayed in a much more positive manner across all media forms and content. Previous analyses have shown that Whites receive a larger portion of positive and sympathetic roles in news programming (Greenberg, Mastro & Brand, 2002). To see why this is the case we again return to the three types of comparisons used by scholars.

**Inter-group and Inter-role analyses of Whites.** Many of the findings on the Inter-group and Inter-role levels run perpendicular those for Latinos and Blacks. As such, a detailed explanation need not be given to individual findings, as they were largely detailed above. The earliest studies found support for the notion that Whites were significantly less likely than Blacks to be seen as perpetrators of crime (Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994; Romer et al., 1998), yet more likely to be seen as the victims of crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000b; Romer et al, 1998; Sorenson, 1998). Other studies found that Whites were more likely than other racial groups to be shown as police officers in local area news (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b). This finding held true at the network news level as well (Dixon et al., 2003; Entman, 1994) and for White juveniles (Dixon & Azocar, 2006). These findings were in stark contrast to the lack of difference found in non-crime news (Romer et al., 1998). With respect to the roles Whites occupy (e.g., Inter-role comparisons) most frequently, Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) found that Whites were more likely to be shown as victims of crime and police officers than as perpetrators of crime. In Internet news, Josey et al., (2010) found that Whites largely avoided associations with stereotypic issues and had a relatively dispersed range of role portrayals.

**Inter-Reality Comparisons of Whites.** In a series of patterns similar to that noted above, Inter-reality comparisons for Whites find accuracy in negative roles, but over-representation in largely positive frameworks. Romer and colleagues (1998) found that Whites were over represented as victims of crime when compared to actual crime rates. Dixon et al. (2003) found similar portrayals. When making comparisons on criminality, studies largely find Whites to be portrayed at a rate consistent with arrest reports (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Dixon et al., 2003; Dixon & Azocar, 2006). In more positive portrayals, Whites have been found to be shown as police officers in a greater proportion than police department employment data

would indicate is actually the case (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Dixon et al., 2003). Lastly, in making comparisons to US Census data, Josey et al., (2010) found that Whites were significantly over-represented in Internet news stories. This was true of individuals featured in images, headlines, and the main body associated with any news story (2010). Further, this over-representation was devoid of any socially problematic associations.

**Whites as a whole.** Taken together, it appears that Whites, as a racial group, maintain a level of privilege in the news media. This is evidenced by sympathetic and positive roles. Further, when compared to actual population data and crime reports, Whites are underrepresented as lawbreakers and overrepresented as victims. These findings suggest that news outlets dichotomize stories along classic racialized lines (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; 2000b; Entman, 1990; 1992; Josey et al., 2010; Romer et al., 1998; Sorenson et al., 1998). Owing to this dichotomy, little is known about the specific characterization of Whites in news other than as a reference group to minorities. This dissertation fully explores the way Whites are deemed the *norm*, escaping blame and having equity bestowed upon them. Yet, this dissertation advances racial scholarship in other important ways as well. It examines groups beyond the traditional triad of race (e.g., White/Black/Latino). As such, it is prudent to note how other marginalized groups have been portrayed in the news.

### **Portrayals of Other Marginalized Groups in the News**

The study of race and news has largely used a Black/White dichotomy. Only recent analyses include the study of Latinos and other racial groups (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Josey et al., 2010). As such, findings are limited. Three groups will be briefly discussed to fully understand what is known in this area: Asian/Asian Americans, Native Americans and Arab/Arab Americans.

Investigations into how Asians are portrayed by the media have received relatively little attention in comparison to Latinos and Blacks (Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003). Poindexter and colleagues (2003) found that Asian Americans are less likely than Whites, Blacks or Latinos to be the focus of news stories. Further, they were significantly less likely to be news reporters or interviewees for news stories (2003). However, when Asians are featured in news, studies have demonstrated that in both traditional media (Wong et al., 1998) and new media (Josey et al., 2010), Asians are portrayed as *model minorities*. Wong et al. (1998) notes that the model minority is characterized as obedient, hard working, and non-confrontational. This status largely causes Asians to be ignored from discussions of race and to avoid associations with problematic social issues (1998). Further, portrayals of Asians in news stories are largely absent, occupying a small percentage (e.g., less than 1%) of the overall characters mentioned in news stories (Josey et al., 2010).

Native Americans may have been the original settlers of North America, yet in the overall media landscapes they make up a miniscule proportion of the overall characters (Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002). When studies have investigated Native Americans, they tend to be highly stereotypic (Merskin, 1998). Specifically, the roles offered are based on ancient notions of the brave warrior or involve some sort of highly mystical cultural practice (1998). In news, Native Americans are largely invisible (Heider, 2000; Josey et al., 2010; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003). When they are seen, they largely appear in stories revolving around sports mascots, alcoholism, gambling, or cultural festivals (Ganje, 2003; Heider, 2000; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003). In the most recent analysis of news to include Native Americans as a coding category (Josey et al.,

2010) no Native Americans were seen as characters or in images. Thus, it appears that Native Americans are largely invisible.

The final marginalized group to consider is that of Arabs/Arab Americans. Since 9/11, there has been an increased focus on how Arabs and Arab Americans have been portrayed in news media (Oswald, 2005; Person & Musher-Eizenman, 2005). Previous studies have demonstrated that Arabs in general are associated with issues of terrorism and ethnic blame (Dixon & Williams, 2015; Josey et al., 2010; Oswald, 2005; Person & Musher-Eizenman, 2005). However, research on these types of portrayals is largely still in its formative stages and has yet to yield robust results. One of the first studies to systematically investigate the portrayal of Arabs/Muslims in Internet news, Josey et al., (2010) found that more than any other racial group, Muslims were associated with acts of terror. As important as this finding was, Josey and colleagues failed to make any inter-reality comparisons to test whether Arabs were over-represented as perpetrators of terror when compared to Homeland Security statistics. Dixon and Williams (2015), in looking at cable and network news programming furthered Josey et al.'s (2010) findings by comparing the frequency of Muslims seen as terrorists in news programming to actual terrorism statistics. They found that in contrast to actual reports on terrorism, Muslims were dramatically over-represented as terrorists in news programming by seventy-three percent (2015). Simply put, in both online and traditional news, persons of Muslim and Arab descent are rarely studied, often under-represented in relationship to their actual rate in the general population, yet over-associated with acts of terrorism (Dixon & Williams, 2015; Josey et al., 2010). Taken together, the previous few paragraphs have shown that outside of Latinos, Whites, and African Americans, other racial groups have received scant attention in the extant literature.

Further study is needed to examine these portrayals using larger samples to hopefully draw meaningful statistical comparisons.

Having looked at the major content analytic studies that detail the portrayal of race in news, a broad picture begins to emerge. Specifically, Whites receive significantly more positive portrayals, while minority groups such as African Americans and Latinos do not. Racial groups such as Native Americans, Asians and Arabs are so underrepresented that they are virtually invisible in news coverage. More problematic is that when such groups *are* portrayed, they are associated with highly stereotypic issues. As such, it is prudent to wonder what possible effects these portrayals may have on individuals and later, how such effects could ultimately inform a *Model of Racial Representation* meant for scholars to understand the portrayals of persons of color in the mass media.

### **Review of Experimental and Survey Studies of Race and News**

Compared to the relatively robust number of content analyses examining race and news programming, effects-based studies are fewer in number (Greenberg, Mastro & Brand, 2002). However, a growing number of studies have moved away from out-group identification and homogenization experiments to examine the unique role that news media play in the maintenance, formation, and use of stereotypes. Relying on social cognitive models of media effects such as priming, Cultivation, accessibility, and social identification (see Chapter Three), these studies have demonstrated the real world impact of exposure to stereotypic portrayals of minority groups (2002). Reviewing the relevant effects-based studies will prove prudent as it will provide insight in the formation of categories within the proposed *Model of Racial Representation* detailed in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. In order to fully explain why

this is the case, I will first review existing experimental tests of the effects of stereotypic news on consumers, then detail survey research efforts.

### **Findings from Experimental Research**

Experiments studying the effects of stereotypic news coverage have proven quite fruitful. As with content studies, experimental work largely focuses on issues of crime and African Americans. In general, experiments find an association between exposure to stereotypic stories and negative evaluations of minorities. These studies most often rely on priming and accessibility as a theoretical justification for their results. Thus, exposing individuals to racialized news reports activates stereotypic schemata that may be used to evaluate minorities (Devine, 1989; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Dixon, 2008c; 2007; 2006; Ford, 1997; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Oliver, 2003; Valentino, 1999). A brief review of these findings will now be offered.

**Experimental research using priming.** In one of the earliest experiments, Peffley, Shields and Williams (1996) exposed White college students to news stories featuring either Black or White crime suspects. They found that those exposed to Black suspects rated the character as guiltier than those who saw the White suspect. Additionally, they believed that the Black suspect, more so than the White suspect, would engage in a similar criminal behavior in the future (1996). In another early study, Johnson et al. (1997) found that participants exposed to violent news stories attributed blame for the crime to personal rather than situational factors when the criminal was Black. The same was not true for the other manipulations (e.g., White or race unspecified) or for participants in the non-violent conditions. Important in this study is that Johnson et al. (1997) did not prime race explicitly. Johnson et al. (1997) take this as evidence of

spreading activation for race related schema. Other studies have found similar implicit priming effects for endorsement of punitive crime policies (Dixon 2008c; 2007; 2006a).

Priming effects have been observed for other outcome variables areas as well. Valentino (1999) argues that local crime coverage activates racial attitudes, which are then used to evaluate and make decisions regarding candidates. He found that exposure to crime news depressed participants' rating of democratic presidential performance on crime by those who see Black criminal suspects. Further, spreading activation occurs such that related *race coded* issues are activated and used after seeing Black suspects on other issues (e.g., welfare) despite not being explicitly primed in the manipulation. His results provide even more support for the notion that race need not be explicitly primed to activate race-related stereotypes.

Other scholars have examined the effects of racial primes on participant memory. In a series of studies conducted by Oliver and colleagues, participants were exposed to crime stories and asked to recall the race of the perpetrator (Oliver, 1999; Oliver & Fonash, 2002; Oliver, Jackson, Moses, & Dangerfield, 2004). Findings from these studies generally demonstrate that, over time, existing cognitions influence participants to *misremember* suspects as being African American, when they were indeed not. Oliver (1999) speculates that this effect is due to participants forgetting the race of the suspect over time and relying on existing schemata to fill in the missing information. More evidence of this was obtained by Oliver and Fonash when they found that participants were more likely to misrecall White suspects as being Black than Black as White in violent crime stories when asked to recall the race of a character in a news story (2002).

Taken together these studies illustrate the powerful effect of priming on a number of outcome measures. First, explicit priming of race schemata affects evaluations of Black criminal



suspects. Second, implicit primes using *race coded* issues (e.g., violent crime) causes spreading activation that leads to similar prejudicial judgments. Third, when asked to recall the likeness of an outgroup member (e.g., Whites identifying Blacks), participants are increasingly forced to rely on existing associative networks and schemata to make decisions. This causes more misidentification of outgroup members, especially over time. Finally, the presentation of stereotypic stories in news can dramatically affect a person's endorsement of punitive public policies. However, as powerful as the effects of priming are on participants, they fail to account adequately for difference that may occur in individual participants. To explain this, it is important to consider two moderating variables examined by scholars: existing racial attitudes and prior news viewing behaviors.

**Racial attitudes as a moderator.** Endorsement of racial stereotypes is one of the most well-researched moderators in experimental studies of the effects of racialized news (Dixon, 2008c). A number of studies conducted over the years have evidenced endorsement of racial stereotypes as a powerful moderator of priming effects (Dixon, 2008c; Domke et al., 1999; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gilliam & Iyengar, 1998; Gilliam et al., 1996; Peffley et al., 1996). In studies examining the relationship of stereotype endorsement and support for punitive crime policies, the general trend is that those who are exposed to primes involving African Americans are more likely to support such policies (Gilliam & Iyengar, 1998; Gilliam et al., 1996). These patterns are particularly enhanced for those who endorse stereotypes of African Americans (Dixon, 2008c; Domke et al., 1999; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gilliam & Iyengar, 1998; Gilliam et al., 1996; Peffley et al., 1996).

**News viewing as a moderator.** To examine the unique role that stereotypic news stories play in cultivating unrealistic views of minorities, scholars are now examining prior news

consumption as a moderating variable (Dixon, 2008c; 2007). In one such study Dixon (2007) exposed participants to news stories featuring either White, Black, or race unidentified suspects. He also exposed participants to stories featuring a police officer manipulation with the same racial breakdown. Dixon had participants indicate how much news they viewed and complete racial recall measures for suspects and police officers. He found that race unidentified perpetrators were rated by participants as being more likely to have been Black (2007). Heavy news viewers expressed more confidence that the unidentified officers were White than did light news viewers. News viewing also predicted less liking of featured Black officers and more positive evaluations of race unidentified officers (2007).

These results provide evidence for a Cultivation effect because the effects were most pronounced for heavy news viewers. Further, Dixon makes the case that these results are evidence that race does not have to be explicitly primed for heavy news viewers to make such judgments in ambiguous racial situations. Again, this is a function of both the content in news and the process of Cultivation. Content studies have shown that crime perpetrating is heavily coded as a *Black issue* whereas law enforcement is coded as a *White issue* (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). The Cultivation Hypothesis notes that those who consume the most media are most likely to develop cognitive networks that see the world as a reflection of what they see in the media. Heavy viewing of news exposes individuals to the *Blacks as superpredators/Whites as officers* script (Gilliam & Iyengar, 1998). This viewing makes these schemata of crime and Blacks highly connected and accessible. Thus, for heavy news viewers, one only need prime the Black or Crime schema to activate the other.

On the surface, it may appear as if effects-based studies would have no bearing on theories of understanding content. However, I will argue in Chapter Three that understanding

the effects of racialized news content allows scholars to advance a much more robust theory for understanding content. Further I will argue that the pernicious effects of stereotypic representations should be considered with positively valenced representations when assessing a group's progress toward equitable representation in news content. More meaningful assessments of group progress will in turn allow future effects-based scholars to develop better a priori hypotheses that are more systematically tied to the actual content of racial representation in Internet news as a whole. Having considered known effects of problematic portrayals of persons of color, I will now lay out findings from survey research.

### **Findings from Survey Investigations**

Early survey investigations into the effects of exposure to stereotypic news content found only a modest correlation between exposure and real world perceptions (Greenberg, Mastro & Brand, 2002). A survey by Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Brentar (1992) found that an increased exposure to television news was highly correlated with lower evaluations of Black's socioeconomic status. The same pattern was obtained in a separate survey by Busselle and Crandall (2002). These authors surmise that repeated viewing of stereotypic news content aids in the development of cognitive schemata about minorities that are highly stereotypic.

Later survey research found results consistent with this notion. A study by Oliver and Armstrong (1995) found that heavy exposure to reality based programming (e.g., Cops) where minorities are disproportionately shown to be violent criminal perpetrators (Oliver, 1996) was associated with overestimations of crime rates. This is especially true when participants are asked to give the percentage of crime perpetrated by minority groups (1996).

In a study of exposure to news and perceptions of minority criminality Dixon (2008a) found that increased consumption of news was positively correlated with overall concern

regarding crime. After having participants read a vignette about a crime suspect who was described as being either White, Black or race-unidentified, Dixon (2008a) had participants rate the culpability of the suspect. He found a positive correlation between crime news consumption and high ratings of culpability for Black and race-unidentified suspects. The same was not true for the White suspect (2008a).

In a related study, Dixon (2008b) found that increased consumption of network television news was negatively related to estimates of Black income levels. Further, results of the survey found that increased consumption of network news was positively related to endorsement of ethnic stereotypes and modern racism scores. Specifically, Dixon (2008b) found that increased viewing of network news was associated with increased beliefs that Blacks are poor and intimidating.

Taken together, survey research has found a strong correlation between increased consumption of stereotyped portrayals of minorities (e.g., Blacks in news) and negative evaluations of African Americans. However, one of the drawbacks of prior research is that it did not investigate minority groups other than African Americans as dependent targets of stereotyping. As such, one may only speculate as to what patterns would emerge for Native Americans, Asians, Arabs, or Latinos given the unique representations they have received in news media.

As has become clear, the portrayal of minorities in news programming is highly stereotypic. These portrayals, in turn, have a number of deleterious effects on individuals who consume news. Although these studies may present a relatively complete picture of the portrayal of race in the traditional television news and its effects, important caveats must be explored prior

to concluding this review. To accomplish this, a number of notable shortcomings in the literature will now be detailed.

### **Notable Voids in the Study of Race in News**

Despite all of the work that has been done detailing the content and relevant effects of the portrayals of race in news media, several notable voids in the extant literature are apparent. These voids, detailed below will be directly remedied by this dissertation, furthering our understanding of modern portrayals of persons of color in a more holistic manner. First it is necessary to highlight the virtual absence of any work examining Internet news. Second it is necessary to detail the narrowly focused manner in which research has been conducted in this area. Third it is necessary to examine sampling constraints present within the existing body of literature. Finally I will consider the largely absent attempts to develop and utilize a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the portrayal of race in news.

### **The Mysterious Absence of Internet News**

Although much is known regarding the portrayal of certain racial groups in local television news, much work needs to be done to extend prior findings into the contemporary era (Dixon & Josey, 2013). Although foundational work in the area of race and news dates back to the 1990s and continued well into the early 2000s, encompassing some print, local and national news, few studies of the content of news have been conducted recently. Surely, much of this is owing to the relative stability of prior findings (Dixon & Josey, 2013). However, as new interactive media forms have gradually overtaken more traditional forms of news media (Pew, 2000), scholars must once again turn our attention to how race is portrayed in news. Specifically, scholars must comprehensively detail the way persons of color are being portrayed online. To date few studies have answered this call.

In the first and only published content analysis of the portrayal of race in online news, Josey and colleagues examined the top 13 online news websites as ranked by overall traffic. Their sample included both traditional news sources with online counterparts (e.g., *The New York Times*) and sources that only had an online presence (e.g., Google and Yahoo News). They examined the portrayal of race on a number of important levels: headlines, images associated with stories, top and popular news stories.

Josey and colleagues (2010) found that Whites are over-represented at all levels of portrayal (e.g., Headline, Image, and Character) when compared to US Census data. They found that Blacks, Latinos, and Asians were under represented. Further, this trend was most pronounced for stories deemed to be *top news* by the news websites and for the stories which were consumed most by readers (e.g., popular news) (2010). On an inter-group level, Josey et al. (2010) found that, when compared to Whites, people of color (e.g., Blacks/Latinos) were significantly more likely to be portrayed as poverty stricken. Further, Blacks were more likely than all groups to be associated with crime; Latinos with illegal immigration, and Arabs with terrorism (2010). Whites and Asians largely escaped such problematic portrayals. Josey et al. (2010) make the argument that this is because Asians are deemed *model minorities* and that Whites are once again escaping any issues related to ethnic blame.

Although Josey and colleagues' (2010) investigation was an important first step in the study of Internet news, it is hampered by constraints that this dissertation overcomes. The first is that their sample only included 13 websites and any related news accessible by a single click from the homepage. This ultimately yielded a small sample size (N=385). The current study examines 20 websites with any related news accessible within 3 links of the main page. This will produce nearly ten times the amount of stories for analysis (N=3,100). This will allow for a

more diverse set of stories and ultimately a broader picture of race online. Second, the prior study only examined a single sample week of coverage drawn from a 3-month period of time (2010). The current study draws its sample from over two years of sampling in creating a full composite month for analysis. It also was conducted following the election of America's first Black president allowing it to account for any changes that may occur in coverage of Blacks as a result. The current study also seeks to remedy possibly the largest problem faced by prior studies on race in news: moving beyond the race/crime paradigm.

### **The Singular Focus of Prior Studies**

Although research in the area of content analysis has yielded many powerful findings, it has nonetheless been hampered by several shortcomings. One important shortcoming is a singular focus on crime news. Early and more contemporary studies of both print and televised news have detailed the portrayal of Latinos and African Americans as criminals. However, given that other studies, most notably Josey et al. (2010) and Dixon and Williams (2015) have found that Latinos are disproportionately associated with other issues such as illegal immigration, one is left wondering whether other highly stereotypic portrayals were missed by prior studies. It is, of course, possible that Blacks were only portrayed in highly problematic manners in crime news or that only crime stories in local, network, and cable news contained stereotypic portrayals. More likely is that stories representing Latinos or African Americans in other highly stereotypic manners were simply not included in the sample or coding scheme and thus were not captured. In order to gain a more complete picture of the portrayal of race in news, scholars must look beyond crime news, to examine stereotypes for each racial group in other content areas. This dissertation remedies that problem by including alternative stereotypes for

each racial group as well as having open-ended measures to capture that which the researcher did not originally hypothesize.

The next problem in prior analyses of news is that it largely focused on the dichotomy of Black and White portrayals of *crime* news, occasionally including groups such as Latinos (Dixon, 2006a, 2006b; Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Entman, 1992, 1994; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Gilliam, Iyengar, Simon, & Wright, 1996; Johnson & Dixon, 2008; Josey et al., 2010; Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). Only a handful of studies have investigated the portrayals of Latinos, Arabs (Muslims), Asians, and Native Americans (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Josey et al., 2010). As such, scholars know a great deal about how Blacks, Whites, and, sometimes, Latinos are portrayed with respect to crime news, but little about other groups or other highly problematic ways they may be represented that are not related to crime. Further, one may make the case that since terrorism and illegal immigration are forms of crime, that what we know regarding Latinos and Arabs is also limited to stereotypic portrayals within the larger framework of crime news. This dissertation remedies this problem by considering a multiplicity of stereotypes beyond crime news. It includes ones not previously considered within the area of race and news, greatly expanding our knowledge of *all* of the problematic portrayals of persons of color in Internet news media.

The third limitation of prior news analyses is that little if any attention has been paid to the possibility that representations that run counter to or have an opposite valence to traditional negative stereotypic portrayals in news media for minorities. Unfortunately, part of the nature of performing analyses in the area of crime news almost exclusively is that one may make the case that prior research may simply be creating a self-fulfilling prophesy. Simply put, it is possible that by limiting analysis to areas of crime, we as researchers only account for a singular, highly



negative portrayal of race, missing any possible portrayals that might run counter in valance. This dissertation remedies this problem by examining stereotypic, counter-stereotypic and stereotype-neutral presentations. To be sure, the current study found evidence of negative stereotyping (e.g., Welfare Queen/Migrant Latino Worker/Radical Arab) for most minority groups, yet by broadening its lens to include other news categories, roles, and stereotypes it provides a more robust analysis than that found in prior studies. Whereas these three concerns are important, more problems with existing literature must be explored to properly contextualize the need for the current dissertation.

### **Methodological Constraints**

Prior studies of the portrayal of race in the mass media have been largely focused on studying Blacks, Whites, and Latinos. However, this is not the only major constraint present within the extant literature. Prior studies, with the exception of Josey et al., (2010) have focused their efforts largely on local televised news (Entman, 1994; Dixon & Linz, 2000a; 2000b). To be sure, a few studies have examined the portrayal of race within the context of cable news (Dixon & Williams, 2015) and print (Sorenson et al., 1998). However, the bulk of existing research has focused on a small slice of the overall news being presented to consumers. This is largely due to the fact that until very recently, most consumers received most of their information regarding the world around them from local nightly television news (Pew, 2000). However, as the world has transitioned from analog to digital and airwaves to Internet, so have their news habits (2000).

As previously noted, the Internet has changed the way consumers gather their news. Individuals are increasingly relying on non-linear Internet news websites as their first and primary source of information (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Josey et al., 2010; Pew, 2000). Unfortunately, research has been slow to bring the same level of nuance and attention to these

online forms of news as they did with television. With the exception of Josey et al. (2010), studies examining the portrayal of race in Internet news are sparse. This dissertation will remedy this problem by furthering the work started by Josey and colleagues, including a larger sample, increased number of units of analysis and longer sampling frame. However, even with a larger sample and broadened scope of examination, this dissertation would be incomplete if it did not attempt to resolve the final and most glaring problem in the extant literature: developing a theoretical framework to contextualize the racialization of minority groups across all contexts.

### **The Lack of a Unified Theoretical Framework**

Prior studies examining the portrayal of race in news media have, on the whole, lacked a true comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the entirety of news portrayals. Studies have largely borrowed from prior works or other disciplines to explain the content they have found. Several studies have relied on a theory of Ethnic Blame Discourse to explain the portrayals of crime news (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Josey et al., 2010; Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). This theory explains problematic portrayals in news for minorities by noting that minority groups are often associated with socially problematic issues (e.g., crime/immigration) through routinized ethnic discourse in news. In essence, by routinely covering crime news and associating it with Blacks, Ethnic Blame Discourse speculates that crime then becomes a *Black* issue (Josey et al., 2010). The same holds true for other problematic issues such as Terrorism or Immigration. While Ethnic Blame Discourse is a powerful tool to help scholars understand how problematic issues become associated with certain groups, it really only pertains to *problematic* issues. As such it does little to explain anything that is stereotypic, but not problematic per se (e.g., Black athlete stereotype). Further, it is a means of explaining a problematic type of portrayal rather than a means for scholars to understand the full portrayal of each racial group.

Other studies have sought to address this by tapping into more comprehensive theories of representation that were developed for other media forms. Josey and colleagues attempted to utilize Cedric Clark's *Stages of Minority Representation* to understand the portrayal of race in news media (2010). While Josey and colleague's (2010) attempt at using a more comprehensive theory was a fruitful initial effort, it is apparent (as will be detailed more fully in Chapter Three of this text) that Clark's stages fail to do a comprehensive job in accounting for multiple racial groups and the myriad of representations presented in modern Internet news. Even Josey et al.'s (2010) analysis notes that Clark's stages model requires substantial modification to accurately account for racial representation in Internet news.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that the portrayal of persons of color in news media is highly problematic in nature. Prior analyses repeatedly demonstrate that minorities are shown in stereotypic and demeaning manners across media types and genre. Further, the review presented in this chapter shows that such portrayals have a definite impact on media consumers. Lastly, it demonstrated that there are notable and important voids within the literature that must be addressed. Each of these points highlight the need for further study and development of a broad *Model of Racial Representation* for content scholars to utilize in understanding how race is portrayed in *all* news. This model should meaningfully account for known variables within the effects-based literature, allowing future media effects research to build on content studies using this robust model. In the following chapter (Three) I will lay out in full the theoretical tools used by traditional scholars of race and news media, noting what they contribute and what is left unanswered. This will eventually point to the need for the development of a comprehensive *Model of Racial Representation*.

### **Chapter Three: Theoretical Understandings of Stereotypes in Mass Media**

Chapter One of this dissertation gave a brief overview of the theories under consideration for informing the analysis of this study. Chapter Two laid out the major findings present in the extant research conducted by race scholars. This chapter advances a new *Model of Racial Representation*. In doing so, it will begin by giving an overview of the utility of basing content analytic findings within practical theories of content and effects. It will then consider the foundational theory advanced by Cedric Clark (1972) which attempts to provide scholars with a means to classify racial groups into one of four stages of media representation. In doing so, the review will reveal the shortcomings of Clark's stages approach, leading to the impetus driving the need for a more comprehensive theory that analyzes news media content. I argue that any content theory must be first rooted in effects-based research. As such, this chapter will also explore two prominent effects theories as they are applied to racialized media. The seemingly irreconcilable differences between the two will be bridged within a new media context, ultimately serving as the basis for the proposed model utilized in this dissertation. However, to fully understand why these steps are taken, it is first necessary to explicate the overall theoretical goals of this dissertation.

#### **Overview of the Theoretical Goals of the Study**

As noted in Chapter One of this dissertation, one of the primary goals of this study is to explain the ways in which persons of color are represented across news media. Neuendorf (2002) among others makes the case that when attempting to understand any communication phenomenon; one must examine the content of the message first. She thus elevates content analysis to its rightful position alongside that of effects-based research. Yet in doing so, Neuendorf (2002) and Krippendorff (2004) make the case that all content analysis must proceed

from a solid foundation rooted in theoretical grounds. This can come in the form of content analyses being informed a priori from existing content theories. This author certainly agrees with this sentiment. However, content theory and analysis fall short of the ultimate goal of communication research if they fail to have a clear connection to effects based theorizing (Severin & Tankard, 2001). For many scholars, the over-arching drive in studying messages is to understand their effect on media consumers (2001). Thus, content studies and theory divorced from the world of effects research is of little utility. As is noted below, much of prior research devised content theories that have little connection with the effects-based world. This dissertation seeks to remedy that problem by developing a new *Model of Racial Representation* that is informed by prior content theories, while reconciling and incorporating conflicting effects-based theories into its underlying assumptions. In doing so it, for the first time in race research, lays out a means to understand content that dovetails nicely with the effects-based literature.

### **Considering Clark's Stages of Minority Representation**

Before moving on to consider the comprehensive *Model of Racial Representation* used in the interpretation of this dissertation's data set, it is first useful to consider the most prominent theory advanced to understand racial representation that currently exists: Clark's Stages of Minority Representation. Cedric Clark (1972) advanced that racial groups are in one of four stages of representation in the media. As a racial group gains greater acceptance in US culture, it moves further along his stages towards equal and fair representation. The traditional implementation of Clark's stages will now be considered, followed by a discussion of the shortcomings of his model.

## **The Traditional Implementation of Clark's Stages of Minority Representation**

According to Clark (1972), minority groups can be categorized as being in one of four stages of representation in the media: non-recognition, ridicule, regulation and respect. Each stage corresponds to an increasingly fair and balanced level of portrayal. Further, all minority groups proceed through these stages. Clark (1972) was specifically theorizing about entertainment media. The first stage is that of non-recognition.

**Non-recognition.** Clark (1972) describes the first stage of representation as one of non-recognition. In this stage, groups are largely absent from media content, or as Clark describes them, they are *invisible*. Specifically, they make up a very small percentage of the overall characters or images in media content. While groups may achieve some level of visibility, it is usually in a novel fashion (1972). An example of a group in this stage is Native Americans. Native Americans are rarely seen in media coverage, typically appearing in stories about gambling and cultural festivals (Ganje, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

**Ridicule.** The second stage of representation advanced by Clark (1972) is that of ridicule. In this stage, racial groups clearly gain more visibility than those in the non-recognition phase. However, they are often seen in a highly stereotypic or degrading fashion. Most often the hallmarks of ridicule are characters in entertainment who are shown as buffoons with one-dimensional personalities. Examples of this abound in the early portrayals of African Americans in entertainment. Blacks were shown as slapstick clowns, brutes, and mammies (Abraham, 2003; Ross, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

**Regulation.** The third stage of representation described by Clark (1972) is that of regulation. In this stage, racial groups are seen with greater frequency and are more common as

characters or prominent images. Yet despite having largely escaped the highly stereotypic portrayals or buffoon images, groups in this stage are portrayed in limited roles or as non-prominent characters whose back-story is rarely detailed. Clark would note that evidence of this stage is when the media constrains a group to certain mildly stereotypic categories or character tropes (1972). An example of a group in the regulation phase is African Americans. In entertainment this manifests itself such that Blacks are portrayed largely as police officers or judges in programs (Abraham, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003).

**Respect.** The final stage of representation put forth by Clark (1972) is that of respect. When a group enters the respect phase it is portrayed in a balanced and nuanced manner. Here, racial groups are equally likely to be seen in any type of entertainment role. Thus, the group is shown in a diverse and accurate manner, representing the true heterogeneity that exists in the group. Most scholars agree that no historically subordinated minority group in the United States has achieved stage four (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003). Rather, only Whites have been shown to be clearly in the fourth stage of representation (Josey et al., 2010).

### **The Case for a New Model of Minority Representation**

Although much can be understood from Clark's (1972) stages, in applying the model, several shortcomings become apparent. As such it is necessary to make the case for reconsidering Clark's model. Following a critique of Clark's Model, theoretical grounds based in effects research will be laid out leading to the case for a new *Model of Racial Representation* for the current study.

**Reconsidering Clark's model.** Although Clark's (1972) stages of representation are a good first step in understanding how the media represents minority groups, many scholars note

that Clark's stages are limited. Two criticisms of Clark's stages are that it would be more appropriately used in a news setting and that each stage described by Clark reveals little about the ways in which minorities are stereotyped within each stage.

One of the oft-cited shortcomings of Clark's stages is that they are singularly focused on African American portrayals in entertainment and their advancement through the various stages of representation (Giles, 2003). Theorists such as Giles (2003) feel that although Clark's model may work well for African Americans, it neglects the unique historical circumstances of other ethnic and racial groups (2003). These circumstances may in turn affect each group's journey to equal representation. Further, as originally formulated, Clark's (1972) stages present a scenario of progression towards an ultimate goal of respect. Here a group moves forward along each stage in one direction. Thus, it fails to allow or account for circumstances where minority groups may experience setbacks or plateaus in their quest for respectful representation. As such, Clark's stages would be more appropriate as a means of categorization rather than a universal path to equal representation. Further, many critics feel that as a theory, Clark's stages would be more appropriately applied in news settings (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010).

As useful as Clark's (1972) stages are for cataloging which stage of representation a particular racial group may belong, it reveals relatively little regarding the substance of *how* news may present persons of color in highly problematic ways. This represents the second criticism of Clark's theory. Specifically, Clark's stages do little to examine the exact criteria for what each stage should look like for various minority groups (e.g., how many positive portrayals a group needs to move between stages). Further, Clark (1972) does little to give empirical means to distinguish one stage from another. Given that research has demonstrated a litany of both negative (e.g., Black criminal) and positive (e.g., Catholic Latino) stereotypic portrayals of racial



groups, it is highly unlikely that each group will exhibit the same portrayals at each stage. Authors such as Giles (2003) note that Clark's stages should be supplemented to demonstrate how each stage of representation becomes problematic for various racial groups. Previous analyses have attempted to answer this call by using Clark's stages as more of a typology, supplementing it with ethnic blame discourse to better characterize the portrayals within each stage (Josey et al., 2010). Yet despite the move from a stages model to a typology, little conceptual or operational work has been done to explicate the nature and criteria for such a typology. As such it is necessary to improve upon Josey et al.'s (2010) reformulation of Clark's stages and formalize a *Model of Racial Representation*. This improvement will be built from the ground up, relying upon effects-based theories to inform our understanding of the manifestation of content in media. The two theoretical tools used to develop the proposed *Model of Racial Representation* are the Cultivation Hypothesis and social categorization/identity theory and their underlying cognitive explanations.

### **The Cultivation Hypothesis and Representation**

In the extant research examining the effects of media messages on their consumers, perhaps no theory is as often trumpeted or vilified as the Cultivation Hypothesis. At its core, the Cultivation Hypothesis postulates that consumers of media will grow to have expectations of the real world similar to those found in the media they consume (Gerbner et al., 1980). Though often criticized on theoretical grounds, the general Cultivation framework has received strong empirical support over the years (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorelli, 1994, 1980; Dixon, 2006a, 2006b; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Shrum, 2001; Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993). Thus, the Cultivation hypothesis would postulate that the more consumers view stereotyped news content (e.g., Blacks as criminals) the more they would likely see that as a reflection of reality. Research

tends to bear this notion out (Dixon, 2006a, 2006b; Dixon & Maddox, 2005). In essence, the key take away from the Cultivation Hypothesis is that quantity matters over quality. Simply put, the more content one observes and the more consistent that content is across messages, the more likely a consumer is to internalize that content as an accurate reflection of reality. Thus, for the Cultivation Hypothesis, the individual and his attributes matters less than the messages, their content, and the frequency of these messages in the overall media landscape. However, the Cultivation Hypothesis does not ignore the role of individuals in attitude formation. To understand how this is the case, it is necessary to understand two corollaries of the Cultivation Hypothesis: Mainstreaming and Resonance.

**Mainstreaming and Resonance.** Gerbner and colleagues (1980) noted two important caveats to the Cultivation Hypothesis: Mainstreaming and Resonance. Each attempts to account for how the individual figures into the process of opinion formation. Mainstreaming notes that individuals, regardless of background or social group membership, will come to have similar ideas about the world around them with increased media consumption. In essence, what Cultivation is saying here is that an individual's personal experience, attributes, and existing cognitive structure matters less than the messages they consume, if they consume at a high level. Resonance takes this a step further noting that individuals may in essence experience a double dose of Cultivation if what they see in the media messages reinforces their experiences in real life (or vice versa). Simply put, mainstreaming and resonance advance that regardless of a person's background, beliefs or experiences, messages in the media, when consumed at a high level, form opinions and beliefs about the world. This notion is predicated upon social cognitive theories of associative networks.

## Associative Network Theory

The major cognitive theoretical tool used by scholars to explain how the Cultivation Hypothesis works is the theory of associative networks. Bower (1981) describes the way that individuals store and access information as a series of associated networks. Each network has a set of nodes that represent a piece of information. Some over-arching concept or schema in turn links these nodes. The more tightly integrated a network of nodes, the more developed the schema. Stronger networks are likely to be used more frequently and represent stronger attitudes. Networks of nodes are linked in a superstructure where activation of one construct *spreads*, activating others (Aldrich, Sullivan, & Borgida, 1989; Graber, 1988; Iyengar, 1991). The Associative Network Model of cognition has been validated in numerous media effects (Domke et al., 1998; Domke et al., 1999; Valentino, 1999) and psychological studies (Anderson, 1983; Fazio, 1986; Higgins & Bargh, 1987; Higgins & King, 1981; Wyer & Srull, 1989). Important in this model are the powerful effects of priming and spreading activation. In short, exposure to a concept (e.g., race) *primes* an individual, bringing to mind related concepts. Two concepts related to this model are key in understanding Cultivation: accessibility and application.

**Accessibility.** Accessibility is the ease with which a network of nodes can be activated and used by an individual (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Valentino, 1999). Research has shown that recurrent consumption of media messages increases a construct's accessibility (Shrum, 2009). Thus, the more one views a particular stereotype within media messages, the more accessible that stereotype becomes. This increases the likelihood of stereotype use as it affects the construct's activation potential (Higgins, 1996). Repeated exposure to, and use of, any stereotype could, in turn strengthen the schema, if the stimulus presented to the viewer is deemed as salient and applicable (1996). This in turn makes chronically accessible constructs stable over

time representing reinforcing or becoming strongly held beliefs, which in turn are likely to be used when evaluating a stimulus. From a Cultivation perspective, greater accessibility, as in chronic, mediates the ability to recall and construct judgments such that the more accessible a construct becomes, the more likely a Cultivation effect will be observed (Shrum, 2009).

Networks can also be highly accessible because they were used recently or brought to mind from exposure to a stimulus (Higgins, 1996). An example of this would be to prime an individual with a photo of an African American and then ask him to rate how likely that person is to be a criminal. Because the construct of Blacks as criminals is recently accessible, it is likely to be used when making the judgment of the photo (provided that social desirability does not play a role). This is because it is near the *top of the mental heap*, such that its activation potential is high for a short time after exposure (Higgins, 1996). Again, this is predicated on whether the photo of the African American man is truly salient to the viewer resulting in activation and use of the construct. Put into the current context, racialized news may serve as a prime, activating associative networks for a particular racial group, which spread to related networks and used ultimately in evaluation. It is widely agreed that accessibility (either chronic or recent) is a necessary condition for the use of stored stereotypic information. However, there is still debate regarding whether it is a sufficient condition to generate any deleterious effects or application of those cognitions.

**Application.** Some scholars would disagree with the notion that because a series of nodes is well formed and chronically/temporarily accessible it is more likely to be used when evaluating a stimulus (Devine, 1989; Devine & Elliott, 1995). Here another social cognitive construct must be considered: availability. Higgins (1996) notes that in order for any construct to be accessible, it must first make its way into an individual's cognitive structure and be stored.

In essence, stereotype formation and use is, first, predicated on the stereotype itself being formed within the cognitive structure, or available (1996). Once available, Higgins (1996) argues that a recently or chronically accessible cognitive structure (e.g., stereotypes here), can be used if the stimulus an individual encounters is seen as salient. Devine (1989) argues that individuals can circumvent this process given the appropriate amount of cognitive resources and a high degree of motivation. In essence, even when a racialized depiction may appear salient and activate accessible, cognitively related information, a person may suppress the application of the information that is brought to mind (1989). This happens if a person has both a high level of motivation to avoid using the stereotype as well as the cognitive resources within the moment to suppress use of the stereotype. Thus, accessibility of a construct is necessary, when motivation is low, but not sufficient to explain the use of stereotypes (1989).

For Devine and others, it is entirely possible for an individual to have a Black stereotype schema that is highly accessible and tightly developed, yet not use it if that same individual is highly motivated and has the appropriate resources at his disposal. Yet measuring how likely a person is to access and use a stereotype has created a divide in race scholarship. Some scholars use implicit attitude measures of recognition to demonstrate accessibility (Bargh, 1999). For many scholars, modern race scales measure the application of stereotypes. Others feel that implicit attitude tests measure both accessibility and application or racial attitudes (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996).

In summary, the Cultivation Hypothesis suggests that racialized news may contribute to the formation and maintenance of stereotypes in individuals. These stereotypes are represented as schemata or associated networks in memory. The more news one consumes, the more likely one will chronically access and use these networks. The chronic access and use of these

networks create more developed stereotype schemata in one's memory. These schemata will have a lower initial activation threshold, making them more likely to be used when an individual is primed by racial cues in news. This can ultimately have a multitude of deleterious effects on participants' attitudes, behaviors, beliefs and emotions if he is not motivated to avoid relying on stereotypic schemata. Yet as powerful as the Cultivation Hypothesis is in explaining and predicting racial attitudes formed from media exposure, it is not without detractors.

### **Shortcomings of Cultivation and Associative Networks**

As with many prominent theories within the field of communication research, Cultivation has some significant detractors. Although a full review of the major criticisms of the Cultivation Hypothesis is beyond the scope of this chapter (for a complete review see Potter, 1993), the most relevant two drawbacks will be noted, pointing to a need to incorporate other perspectives into the proposed model for this dissertation. Scholars have assailed Cultivation for being positivistic, lacking true generality and causality (1993). However, for the purposes of this study, the two largest criticisms relevant will be considered: a lack of consideration for the individual and its assumption of passivity.

One of the larger criticisms of the Cultivation Hypothesis is that in its attempts to explain mass media effects, it fails to consider individual difference (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Potter, 1993). In fact, two of the maxims of its hypothesis, Mainstreaming and Resonance, attempt to do away with the importance of an individual's beliefs or needs that might run contrary to media portrayals. Simply put, Cultivation seeks to explain how individuals see the world through a reliance on a uniform interpretation and encoding of media messages. However, as other notable research has demonstrated, an

individual's pre-existing beliefs and needs matter in a wide variety of contexts in media viewing (Blumer & McQuail, 1969; McGuire, 1974; McQuail, 1983; Rubin & Windahl, 1986; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Knobloch & Meng, 2009; Knobloch & Alter, 2007; Melican & Dixon, 2008; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974; Sears & Freedman, 1967; Zillmann et al., 2004). As such, any model attempting to explain media content from an effects-based perspective must seek support to account for such findings.

The second larger criticism of the Cultivation Hypothesis is that it assumes a largely passive audience (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009; Potter, 1993). Within this conception of the audience, the communicator (e.g., the mass media) puts forth a message, which is then received by the audience, leading to communication effects. Rooted in Skinnerian psychological traditions, this view resembles a one-way model of communication more than modern transactional views (Allport, 1985; Biocca, 1988). This naturally seems appropriate given the time frame when Cultivation was first advanced (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Cultivation was largely conceived during an era where Mass Media outlets were fewer in nature and messages were presented in a linear *opt in or opt out* mode. Simply put, the choices presented to audience members were limited and as such selectivity or individual needs mattered considerably less than today.

Given that in the modern media landscape, messages are available on demand, non-linear in fashion, and accessible at any time across multiple media forms, it is highly likely that individuals may *opt out* or be more selective in their media choices, ultimately lessening the effect that Cultivation may have upon them. Thus, individuals may rely on existing beliefs or

group membership when choosing which messages to consume (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). Further, their existing beliefs or group membership may shape the ways they seek out or interpret the messages they encounter (Mastro, 2009). In summation, it is possible that in a new media environment, the ubiquity of a Cultivation effect may not be so pervasive as in previous media forms. Thus, it is necessary to consider the second theoretical tool underlying the proposed *Model of Racial Representation*.

### **Social Theories, Selectivity, and Content Interpretation**

As powerful as the Cultivation Hypothesis is at explaining and predicting the effects of media messages on consumers, it is possible in a new media environment that individuals may engage in selectivity based upon their prior beliefs or group memberships. As such it is necessary to consider alternative theories of media influence in addition to Cultivation when constructing the proposed model. One popular theory gaining traction in the extant literature of race research is the theory of Social Categorization and Identity (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Mastro, 2009). This section will explain Social Categorization and Identity theory, their relevance to the current study and two cognitive explanations for how they work.

Social Identity and Categorization theory are two theories that explain how individuals construct their own identity and interpret the world around them based upon group membership (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1985). They stem from a notion of the individual as being distinctly more active than does Cultivation, accounting for differential interpretations and selection of media content (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Billings, 2004; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Mastro, 2009, 2003). Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) advances that individuals construct, at least in part, their identity from membership in some meaningful social



group. This can be any social, political or racial group. In essence, Social Identity theory says that membership in any group greatly affects the ways viewers of media messages select and interpret content (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Mastro, 2009). Prior scholars have used Social Identity Theory successfully in predicting differential interpretations and reactions to media messages (Coover, 2001; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986).

Social Categorization Theory, a closely related, but distinct theory, advanced by John Turner (1985) attempts to take Social Identity Theory a step further by describing the manner in which we think about group membership in relation to out-groups and out-group members. In essence, our membership in any group creates a condition by which we judge out groups in relation to our own. This extends beyond interpersonal communication to media portrayals of other groups as well (Billings, 2004). Prior research has demonstrated that group membership plays a vital role in our categorization and comparisons of other groups when viewing media content (Mastro et al., 2008).

Taken together, Social Identity and Categorization theory postulate that we construct our own identity based upon the groups to which we belong (Mastro, 2009). Further, we judge other groups in relation to our own based upon comparisons we make between ourselves and the *other*. Prior research has adeptly demonstrated that group membership matters in the selection and evaluation of media content (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Knobloch & Meng, 2009; Mastro, 2009). As such, the picture is not as simple as Cultivation originally posited. An individual's sense of self is formed from group membership. This in turn can influence the media we consume (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Knobloch & Meng, 2009) and our interpretation of mediated content (Mastro, 2009). Thus, it is vital to account for such possibilities and their effects in any model that attempts to explain manifest media content. To

understand how Social Identity and Categorization influence media perception and selection one must understand two related theories: Selective Exposure and Perception.

### **Selective Exposure**

Selective exposure as a theory represents an outgrowth of Festinger's (1957) *Cognitive Dissonance Theory* (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Jecker, 1964; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). Klapper (1960) defines selective exposure as the tendency of individuals to *by and large*, "expose themselves to those mass communications which are in accord with their existing attitudes" (p. 1158). Thus, the audience member and his existing beliefs matter when considering content. In essence, selective exposure posits that an individual's beliefs as informed by her identity drives media consumption. For a full review and explanation of selective exposure research see Cotton (1985), Sears and Freedman (1967), or Hart et al. (2009).

Research has found evidence for a selective exposure bias across communication contexts (Cotton, 1985; Hart et al., 2009). These contexts of selective exposure include political (Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009), age (Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010), and race biases (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008). Hart et al. (2009) in their meta-analysis of selective exposure studies note that although findings are not as robust as they were in early research, a consistent and moderate *congenial* bias exists in selective exposure. This has especially been the case in studies of news selection (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick &

Meng, 2009; Knobloch et al., 2005a, 2005b; Zillmann et al., 2004). Applied to the current context, selective exposure posits that a person's beliefs about a particular group shapes what media they may expose themselves to. In Internet news, a person can easily select or avoid news content, thus when constructing a model to characterize racial representations in news, it is necessary to examine the nature of that content which may run contrary or in line with stereotypic beliefs. Doing so allows scholars to hypothesize about the potential consumption of stories and websites.

### **Race, News, and Selective Exposure**

Studies on selective exposure within Internet news are still in their formative stages (Dixon & Josey, 2013). Early work by scholars such as Knobloch-Westerwick and colleagues (2013; 2008) investigated the way individuals use cues present within the homepage of any news website to select news. Within the context of race, it is entirely possible that the images associated with a headline or the headlines themselves provide important cues regarding the type of portrayal a viewer is likely to encounter in a news story. Indeed, Josey et al., (2010) found that headlines (e.g., mention of a stereotype within the headline) and images associated (e.g., image of handcuffed Black male), with Internet news stories often contain highly stereotypic content. As such it is reasonable that individuals may rely on these to avoid or select stereotypic content, depending on their own social identity or their categorization of others (2010).

Indeed support exists that individuals rely on both images and headlines when selecting news stories. Zillman, Knobloch, and Yu (2001) found that individuals tend to favor stories with images accompanying headlines over those that did not. This finding was enhanced for images that depicted victims of crime. Further, participants spent a greater amount time reading and thus were better able to recall information from stories featuring images. Although, this study

did not involve race, one could safely generalize that images play an important role in news selection. Other studies that did investigate the role of social identity (e.g., participant race) on news selection, examined the interaction of headline content and participant race. Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, and Alter (2013) found that group membership played a large role in story selection.

Specifically, Blacks were more likely than Whites to select stories with headlines featuring Blacks (2013). Within these stories that had headlines featuring Blacks, Black participants were more likely to first read positive stories before reading ones that were negative. Whites were more likely than Blacks to select stories featuring Whites in the headlines (2013). Within news, Whites, in a manner similar to Blacks, first read positive stories about Whites before moving onto stories featuring more negative news. Interestingly, despite hypothesizing for such an occurrence, neither Whites nor Blacks avoided reading content about other races. However, a pronounced preference for first reading information about their own group was observed. Although it may be tempting to generalize these findings to racial attitudes (e.g., expressed prejudice) and behaviors for all groups (e.g., Latinos), no study to date has examined the effect of either on news selection.

### **Selective Perception**

Part of the utility of selective exposure is that it allows for testable hypotheses regarding which media messages an individual will most likely consume under specific circumstances, given individual needs, beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors (Cotton, 1985; Hart et al., 2009). However, part of its shortcoming as a theory is that it tells us relatively little regarding how an individual perceives a particular piece of communication. It is entirely possible that individuals can be exposed to the same message and have completely differing interpretations of the same

content (Severin & Tankard, 2001; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974). Moreover, in traditional media situations, or even under certain circumstances in new media, it is relatively difficult for individuals to avoid certain media messages (e.g., election coverage on election night). As such, if scholars hope to understand in a complete fashion why individuals hold the attitudes and beliefs that they do, it is necessary to supplement selective exposure as a theoretical concept. One such way that scholars have attempted to do so is through a related theory known as selective perception (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Selective perception stipulates that individuals, exposed to the same message, may hold differing interpretations of the content contained in the message and make varying appraisals of it as a result (Severin & Tankard, 2001; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974). This fact rests on the process that underlies selective perception. Here, individuals rely on existing cognitive networks to make evaluations and interpretations of various communication stimuli (2001). An individual's existing attitudes, beliefs and previous behaviors lead them to interpret parts of stimuli in a *congenial* manner (2001). This effect, then serves as a reinforcement of their prior attitudes and beliefs or behaviors. Research in the area of Social Identity and Categorization theory illustrate the processes of selective perception (Mastro, 2009).

In sum, recent research in the area of the content and effects of the portrayal of race in the mass media have begun to rely on theoretical approaches that see the audience as more active in nature (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009; Mastro, 2009). This understanding of a more active media consumer begins by considering that, within the context of race, we often construct our notions of self by the groups we belong to (e.g., Social

Identity). It continues by seeing that we often judge others by comparing their group to the one to which we belong, often in ways that preference our own group (e.g., Social Categorization) (Billings, 2004; Mastro, 2009). These two notions have relevance in a new media environment. They predict that we will selectively expose ourselves or perceive media content based upon group Identity or Categorization. This ultimately stems from existing cognitions regarding others and ourselves. Thus, it is critical to not only consider the role that the media play in attitude formation on a larger level (e.g., Cultivation), but also the role that the individual plays in filtering media content. The charge of this section was to lay out the two most common ways for scholars to understand the effects of racialized media content on consumers. This was done in efforts to create a content model, which incorporates effects based theory as part of its underlying assumptions. As has become apparent, the two most prevalent theories used differ as to their conception of the audience in competing ways. As will be shown below, they are not as exclusive as they appear on the surface.

### **The Compatibility of Cultivation and Social Theories**

At first glance, it may appear as if the Cultivation Hypothesis and the Social/Selective models of understanding media effects are at odds. Cultivation sees media effects from a traditional paradigm whereby consumers view the same content in a non-selective fashion and internalize it in a uniform manner. Social/selective models note that the content and the individual matter as they ultimately drive the selection, perception, and effects of media content (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). Of relevance to this dissertation in particular is the fact that Cultivation has roots in traditional media where

choice was limited and selection was curtailed by structural constraints. Social/Selective models may seem most appropriate for new media as the Internet promotes non-linear selectivity. However as will be explained below, Internet content is neither wholly suited for Cultivation nor Social/Selective theories as an explanatory mechanism. Scholars must seek guidance from both to understand the content and effects of online content.

One could make the case that the non-linear media must favor models that rely on individual beliefs when explaining news consumption. Under this way of thinking, an individual's existing cognitive structures are used to explain what news he would consume. Taken a step further, if Social/Selective theories were one hundred percent correct in explaining online news consumption, there should be relatively little overlap between the news agenda of the public and that of the media. However, prior research has demonstrated that even in an environment that lends itself to selectivity and individuation in news consumption, there is a high degree of overlap between that which is deemed news worthy by news producers and that which is ultimately consumed by individuals (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2013; Josey et al., 2010).

This is further complicated by findings from more recent studies. Despite individual cognitive structures which may seemingly drive selective exposure to *congenial* content, evidence from newer selective exposure studies find that we simply tend to spend more time consuming *congenial* content rather than avoiding dissonant content altogether (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Knobloch-Westerwick & Johnson, 2014; Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2009). Simply put, although individuals are presented with endless choices of news on a myriad of news websites, we fail to, as a habit, completely avoid dissonance-producing content (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Knobloch-

Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010). Further, within websites, a vast majority of consumers are reading stories that are advanced by reporters as important or newsworthy (Josey et al., 2010). Thus there is a high degree of overlap between content which is deemed news worthy by content creators and that which is most consumed by readers. Consequently, it appears as if Cultivation and Social/Selective theories may both play a role in Internet news effects.

Second, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is less important to anoint any particular approach as the most appropriate for a given medium as it is to recognize which parts of each may provide inspiration for a content model for explaining the content itself. As such, the proposed *Model of Racial Representation* takes elements from both approaches. It relies on the volume of messages (taken from Cultivation) and the nature of the representation itself (taken from Social/Selective models) in informing its perspective. Cultivation notes that the frequency of a portrayal is critical in its effects on consumers. Whether a slow and steady drip or drench of repeated similar presentations, frequency matters. It is the frequency of portrayals and their consumption that determines the ultimate effects upon consumers. Thus, if something is portrayed in sufficient volume, media consumers will come to accept it as an accurate reflection of reality. However, in a new media environment, for individuals who are motivated, it is possible to avoid or spend less time consuming these portrayals via selectivity. As such, it is necessary to also consider the content itself as a basis for potential effects on consumers. This dissertation posits that both matter. As such, both frequency and the nature of content are considered critical to categorizing racial representation. Frequency matters as it explains how the media may shape or reinforce existing beliefs. Content, for the purposes of this dissertation operationalized as stereotypic content, matters as it serves as a means by which individuals may



select or selectively perceive the racialization of minority groups as predicted by Social Categorization/Identity theory. Below, both constructs are incorporated into a new *Model of Racial Representation* which attempts to correct the shortcomings of Clark's early theorizing about race in the media.

### **The Model of Racial Representation in Mass Media**

As has become clear, Clark's (1972) stages of minority representation greatly add to our understanding of how minorities are portrayed in the media. However, a reformulation of this theory is necessary to address the most common criticisms of it on a theoretical level. I advance that a new *Model of Racial Representation* be constructed and utilized. This theory builds upon the basic essence of Clark's stages, while improving upon its implementation. It allows for uniqueness of each group's particular historical circumstances, while remaining parsimonious enough to be of utility to quantitative scholars. The *Model of Racial Representation* is predicated on statistically observable findings, making it easier to delimit one form of representation from another. Finally it relies on effects-based theory in delimiting the types of representations seen in a new media context. Two central elements to a new *Model of Racial Representation*, culled from Cultivation and Social/Selective theories, in news media will be detailed: frequency and valence of portrayals. This will be followed by an explanation of how each inform our understanding of the portrayal of race in Internet news.

***Frequency of portrayal.*** The first element to consider for the *Model of Racial Representation* is the frequency of portrayals. In Clark's original theory, frequency delimits to which stage each group belongs. Yet, despite this strength, Clark (1972) does not specify any meaningful notion of frequency as a guideline for delimiting one stage from another. Conceptually, the *Model of Racial Representation* certainly shares the view that frequency must

be considered when evaluating the place a racial group occupies in media messages. This is based upon that fact that research from a Cultivation perspective provides ample proof that the frequency of a message is highly correlated with its ability to affect a media consumer's perception of the world around him or her. Simply put, the greater the frequency of a message, the more likely that a consumer will feel that it is an accurate reflection of the group being characterized by a message.

For example, the more that Internet news portrays African Americans as criminal, the more likely that consumers of this message will come to view African Americans as actually being criminal. Frequency can be conceived of in two ways here. The first is the overall frequency of portrayal regardless of type (e.g., stereotypic/non-stereotypic/counter-stereotypic). This is useful in determining whether a group is under-or over-represented in comparison to the population. Operationally, I examine this by relying on *inter-reality* comparisons similar to that used by Dixon and Linz (2000a) and Josey et al., (2010). I will examine the frequency of a group's representation by calculating the mere number of representations of a group and then, using Z-tests of independent proportions, compare that to US Census data for that group. This will yield an accurate comparison as to whether a group is being seen with the frequency that one would expect based upon the US population at large. In doing so, it provides scholars with the opportunity to not only examine a group's portrayal as to its alignment with reality, but also to hypothesize regarding the potential effect of the observed portrayals in future experimental work. As important as frequency is from a Cultivation perspective, it alone is not sufficient to fully explain content or categorize the portrayals observed. To do so, I propose examining the actual manifest content of racialized portrayals through the lens of stereotype traits.

***Valence of portrayals.*** The most often cited shortcoming of Clark's (1972) stages involves its lack of specificity of what each stage looks like (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010). Specifically, it does not mention valence as a criterion for delimiting one stage from another. Conceptually, Josey et al. (2010) took the approach of using ethnic blame as an indicator of status in non-recognition or ridicule over regulation and respect. Thus, for Josey et al. (2010) negative stereotypic portrayals (e.g., ethnic blame) were the only valence used in describing the various stages. What Clark (1972) and Josey et al. (2010) both ignore is the possibility of valence differences between portrayals (e.g., Black criminal/buffoon). Certainly any stereotypic content is problematic at best, but to ignore possible differences in valence is to ignore important variance that might aid in our understanding of the overall racialized news landscape. Further, both Clark (1972) and Josey et al. (2010) fail to account for stereotype-neutral and counter-stereotypic portrayals.

Devine and Elliott (1995) critique early work done on the knowledge and endorsement of racial stereotypes along this line. For Devine and Elliott (1995), to understand stereotypes of minority groups, scholars must first understand the stereotypic traits that make up these larger stereotype schemata. In an experiment, they found that although knowledge of stereotypes remains stable, both the traits that characterize particular stereotypes and endorsement of those stereotypes were dynamic over time (1995). They call for researchers to use a comprehensive set of stereotype traits. Further, they make the case for examining the nature and effects of counter-stereotypic traits (1995). Although they are not explicitly mentioned in their study, one can easily make the case for studying non-stereotypic portrayals as well. Thus, in the current model I consider portrayals as ranging from highly stereotypic in trait valence (e.g., violent Black criminal) to highly counter-stereotypic in trait valence (e.g., a Black chief of medicine).

Operationally, researchers must have clear coding schemes based on prior research as a guide to determining valence in this sense (for a full operationalization of coding schemes refer to Appendix A). Using historical stereotypes and modern traits aids in developing solid coding instructions and ultimately our understanding of the content presented in Internet news. It is important to understand these differences because they not only illuminate content differences but also point to directions for future effects-based research (Devine & Elliott, 1995). Further, valence aids in comparative analyses between racial groups (e.g., model minority versus undocumented immigrant). For the current study, traits were categorized as stereotypic, non-stereotypic, or counter-stereotypic. This was done primarily because Social/Selective effects-based research has demonstrated that not only the frequency, but also the nature of the presentation of content, plays a powerful role in the selection and interpretation of media content.

I propose that both the frequency of a group's portrayal in news and its valence be analyzed as the basis for the new *Model of Racial Representation*. Thus, owing to Cultivation, scholars would first examine the level of representation of any group against real world indicators. Second, it would plot the valence of these portrayals and rely on chi-square statistics to test for the overall balance of reach group's portrayal in Internet news. As will be fully detailed in Chapter Six of this dissertation, this ultimately results in one of three states of *Racial Representation*: Neglect, Imbalance, or Symmetry.

### **Detecting Stereotypes Using the Model of Racial Representation**

One of the primary goals of this dissertation is to catalog the state of racial representation for groups in Internet news. To do this, it is necessary to examine the way this study seeks to understand stereotyping in general. This section lays out the *Model of Racial Representation's* approach to detecting stereotypes, counter-stereotypes and stereotype-neutral content.

Stereotypes in general have many definitions when applied to various contexts. Within the lens of racial stereotypes, they are a widely held, oversimplified idea whereby a reductive set of *traits* are associated with a group (Devine & Elliot, 1995). These traits, in turn can become a stand in or heuristic for the group overall, precluding a detailed and full understanding of the heterogeneity of any racial group. To study stereotypes, is to study how groups are understood in a reductive manner.

Critical race theorists such as Hall (1980), spend a great deal of time cataloging the many varied and nuanced ways that minorities are stereotyped. Further, they explore the relationship between these stereotypes and the subordination of minority groups within society at large. To do so, requires in-depth nuanced analysis that often precludes qualitative and critical scholars from understanding how stereotypes are presented on a larger more aggregate level (e.g., examining thousands of news stories). Quantitative scholarship, where the *Model of Racial Representation* is situated, examines stereotyping on an aggregate and less nuanced level than critical scholarship in order to understand the larger landscape of racialization in Internet news. While both approaches differ in their execution, both provide valuable answers to different parts of the question regarding how stereotypes are created, maintained, and the effects they both have.

As detailed above, the *Model of Racial Representation* examines stereotypes and counter-stereotypes on a more broad level than critical scholarship. It relies on distilling each group's stereotypes into a series of traits. This is both intuitive and keeping with how scholars have investigated stereotypes within effects-based research (Devine & Elliot, 1995). Doing so requires scholars seeking to detect racial stereotyping to have a broad series of trait categories that may be stereotypic or counter-stereotypic for any particular racial group (1995). Within the

current analysis, we relied upon traditional stereotypes and their counter-stereotypic alternatives culled from prior content studies and those found in effects-based research to be associated with any group. A listing of traits found within this study can be found in Table 8 with examples of how they appeared in Internet news in Table 9. Stereotypic traits for one group are not always applicable as traits for other groups. Thus scholars must always be aware in their application of traits in assigning them as stereotypic to certain groups. Further, although some traits may be less caustic (e.g., model minority) than others (e.g., Black Thug), scholars must be aware that no stereotype can truly be understood to be positive in nature. The mere reduction of any group to a series of traits, regardless of the valence attached to them, is harmful (Hall, 1980). As such, scholars should be careful to avoid classifying less caustic traits as necessarily counter-stereotypic. Having explained the way that the *Model of Racial Representation* understands stereotypes, their traits and how to detect them, it is prudent to examine how Cultivation and Social Identity manifest within the model.

### **Cultivation and Social Identity in the Model of Racial Representation**

As has been explained above, part of the innovation in relying on effects-based theories to inform content analytic models are that they produce robust theorizing. Further, by relying on theories from the effects side of the extant literature, testable a priori hypotheses flow from content work more easily. Finally, relying on theories of media effects to form the premises of content theory allows for scholars to make meaningful and valid categories in classifying content. Within the *Model of Racial Representation*, the two premises are frequency (stemming from Cultivation) and valence balance (stemming from Social Identity theory).

Cultivation posits that the most important factor in shaping media consumer's attitudes about persons of color is the sheer frequency of portrayal. This is because greater frequency of

portrayal will likely lead to greater exposure. Thus, according to Cultivation, more exposure leads to a greater likelihood of attitude formation in line with whatever the portrayals show. Social Identity theory posits that the content itself (operationalized as valence) drives exposure and perception. Thus, the presentation of stereotypic, counter-stereotypic and stereotype-neutral information within a news story or the balance of all three across a news website matters.

Social Identity theory posits that individuals will selectively interpret or expose themselves to such content based upon existing cognitive structures that are predicated on group membership. As such, understanding the balance, direction, and magnitude of valence are critical to understanding content itself. Ultimately this balance or *imbalance* may lead to different effects and degrees of consumption for different groups of individuals.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter laid out the theoretical foundation for this dissertation's analysis of the portrayal of race in Internet news. It laid out existing theories regarding how minority groups are presented historically in media forms. It followed a consideration of Clark's (1972) stages of minority representation with a full explanation and justification for incorporating effects based theories into content models. It concluded by laying the basic tenants of a new *Model of Racial Representation* for categorizing the presentation of persons of color in online news. Having fully considered the theoretical approaches relevant to the current study, it is prudent to move onto the hypotheses and research questions under examination in this dissertation.

## **Chapter Four: Hypotheses and Research Questions for Consideration**

The prior chapters of this dissertation have laid the foundation for answers this study seeks to uncover. Chapter One served as an overview of the project as a whole. Chapter Two explained in detail the extant research from which this dissertation arises and furthers. Chapter Three advanced the theoretical tools used to explain the expectations and findings of the present study. It also advanced a new theoretical model for understanding the portrayals of persons of color in news media. This model is derived from both prior content analytic work and informed by effects-based theories of the influence of such content. Chapter Four of this dissertation builds upon the prior chapters by fully explicating the expectations of this dissertation. It lays out a series of hypotheses conceived a priori by the author, which will be tested in full in Chapter Six of this dissertation. It also poses a research question which no known prior research has been able to answer.

The bulk of this dissertation revolves around the notion that to understand the effects of racialized portrayals on media consumers, scholars must first have a holistic understanding of those portrayals. This must be gleaned from three things. The first is a comprehensive model for categorizing the portrayals of persons of color into understandable categories or *states*. The second is that within such a framework, scholars must apply a truly broad set of measures to account for many representations on a multitude of variables (e.g., *Gender*, *Stereotype*, *Counter-Stereotype*). Finally it must derive its delineations between *states* based upon statistically testable data, which is in turn informed by prior effects-based research. The proposed *Model of Racial Representation* outlined in Chapter Three of this dissertation does so.

This chapter is organized around the hypotheses and research questions that this project was designed to address. As mentioned previously, this dissertation advances a new *Model of*



*Racial Representation* to aid scholars in their understanding of the portrayal of race in the mass media. As such, this chapter will first consider a series of hypotheses designed to examine the portrayal of racial groups within the proposed *Model of Racial Representation*. Next, it will move on to lay out hypotheses about larger structural issues regarding the portrayals of persons of color across news segments and news organization types. Finally, it will advance hypotheses and research questions explaining representations within each racial group.

### **Expectations of Representation within the Model of Racial Representation**

Laying out the expectations regarding the overall representation of minority groups within news media requires advancing hypotheses about in which *state* of representation each race will be presented. Accomplishing this requires hypotheses based on prior research, most of which has relied upon piecemeal theory or Clark's Stages. Thus, prior findings for each racial group under consideration will be considered, culminating in the hypotheses of the current study.

Both Clark's (1972) four stages of minority representation and the new *Model of Racial Representation* suggest that racial minority groups could be portrayed in problematic manners. Specifically, these groups should be either largely under-represented (e.g., neglect form) or represented in a minimal way, having race-specific stereotypes associated with them (*neglect* and *imbalance states*). Only Whites should be represented in the *state* of balance. Previous analyses have demonstrated that these types of representations manifest themselves in traditional forms of media, especially news venues (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Entman, 1994, 1992). Recent analyses (Josey et al., 2010) have found that these portrayals hold true in new media as well. Therefore, it is generally hypothesized that racial minority groups will be portrayed by Internet news websites in a manner consistent with prior research and conforming to both Clark's (1972)

stages and the new *Model of Racial Representation*. I will now lay out the hypotheses for each racial group, each stemming from findings present in the extant literature.

**Portrayals of Blacks in Internet news.** Prior research detailing the content of racialized portrayals in news has found a shockingly consistent picture of how minorities are portrayed. The majority of published studies focus on local televised news rather than network, print or Internet news (e.g., Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003). They also largely focus on Black/White comparisons within crime news. Further, existing studies are focused on crime news featuring male criminals. As such, we have a limited understanding of how race is framed outside this narrow area of focus. In these types of studies, Blacks are more likely than Whites to be seen associated with issues of crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Entman, 1990, 1992; Josey et al., 2010). Further, Blacks were more likely than Whites to be portrayed in menacing or criminal ways (Gilliam & Iyengar, 1998; Gilliam et al., 1996; Jamieson, 1992). Later studies found that Blacks were less likely to be seen as victims of crime (Sorenson, Manz & Berk, 1998) and more likely to be portrayed as perpetrators of crime than crime data would suggest (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b). Also, research has shown Blacks to be severely underrepresented when compared to population statistics in traditional media (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) and in new media (Josey et al., 2010). Thus it is hypothesized that:

H1: African Americans will be in a state of *Imbalance*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more stereotypic portrayal.

**Portrayals of Latinos in Internet news.** What we know about the portrayal of Blacks is somewhat echoed in what we know about Latinos. Similar to Blacks, Latinos are less likely than Whites to be seen as victims of crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000b; Sorenson et al., 1998). Further, Latinos are more likely than Whites to be seen as lawbreakers (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) and more

likely to be seen as breaking the law than defending it. However, several studies have found that, in general, Latinos are underrepresented in news altogether despite the roles they occupy (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003; Josey et al., 2010). The study of Latinos in televised news is much less developed than that of African Americans in news. It also suffers from the limitations mentioned for the study of Blacks in news: a focus on male crime scripts. Outside of televised news, Josey et al. (2010) found that when Latinos were portrayed they were associated with issues of poverty and illegal immigration. As a result it is expected that:

H2: Latinos will be in state of *Imbalance*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more stereotypic portrayal.

If we know little about the portrayal of Latinos in news programming, we know far less about other minority groups. Few of the earlier referenced studies in Chapter Two examined portrayals beyond Blacks, Whites and Latinos. Outside the study of these three racial groups, inadequate sample sizes and limited sampling frames have yielded results that fail to reveal the full spectrum of possible racial representations.

**Portrayals of Asians in Internet news.** Studies of how Asians are portrayed in news media have found them to be severely under-represented (Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003) and often portrayed as *model minorities* when they are seen (Josey et al, 2010; Wong et al., 1998). This was true regardless of the medium under investigation. Wong et al. (1998) notes that the model minority is characterized as obedient, hard working, and non-confrontational. This status largely causes Asians to be ignored from discussions of race and to avoid associations with problematic social issues (1998). It is likely that:

H3: Asians will be in a state of *Neglect*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more balanced to positive portrayal.

**Portrayal of Arabs in Internet news.** Arabs as a racial group have gained increased focus over recent years but remain severely understudied in news content (Josey et al., 2010). Previous studies have demonstrated that Arabs, in general, are associated with issues of terrorism and ethnic blame (Josey et al., 2010; Oswald, 2005; Person & Musher-Eizenman, 2005). These findings have been demonstrated in traditional (Oswald, 2005; Person & Musher-Eizenmann, 2005) and new media (Josey et al., 2010). In a similar fashion I expect that:

H4: Arabs will be in a state of *Imbalance*, fairly represented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more stereotypic portrayal.

**Portrayals of Native Americans in Internet news.** Another group, Native Americans, make up a small portion of the overall racialized landscape in news. Previous investigations have found them largely absent from news coverage (Heider, 2000; Josey et al, 2010). When they are seen, they largely appear in stories about sports mascots, alcoholism, gambling, or cultural festivals (Ganje, 2003; Heider, 2000; Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003). As a result I expect that:

H5: Native Americans will be in a state of *Neglect*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more stereotypic portrayal.

**Portrayals of Whites in Internet news.** Previous studies have demonstrated that Whites are overrepresented in news media when compared to US census data (Dixon et al., 2003; Josey et al., 2010). As the dominant racial group in the United States, Whites largely escape racial stereotypes or stigmatization. One study found a virtual absence of stereotypes or problematic

issues presented with White characters in news stories (Josey et al., 2010). Consequently, it is expected that:

H6: Whites will be in a state of *Symmetry*, depicted fairly when compared to US Census data, seeing a balance in the number of stereotypes to counter-stereotypes.

This dissertation will test each hypothesis for each racial group above. In doing so, it will holistically examine how each racial group is presented in Internet news. This will provide a framework for understanding how representations differ across groups. Prior research has demonstrated that news features may differentially present persons of color in more or less stereotypic manners. As such, the following section explains expectations regarding the effects of news features on racial representation.

### **News Structural Differences in Representation of Minorities**

Internet news is not a uniform landscape. There are websites that have offline counterparts (e.g., Fox News) and ones that do not (e.g., Huffington Post). Further, within each news website are landing pages (e.g., Homepages) and various subsections of news. Within each homepage and section are typically stories that are set apart from others and given more prominent placement (e.g., Top News) because the news organization deems them more newsworthy. Additionally, many news websites also have a ranking of which stories are consumed the most by readers (e.g., Popular/Trending News). These structural facets of Internet news pose interesting questions for scholars that must be examined. For example, the mere placement of a news story among Top News may indicate to a consumer that it is more newsworthy and thus may lead to an increased likelihood that it will be consumed above other stories. The following hypotheses deal with issues relating to the structural facets of Internet news which may interact with racial representations.

**Traditional versus Non-Traditional news sites.** Regardless of the race-specific portrayals for each minority group referenced in the model predictions, larger trends across website content may emerge. In a survey analysis, Melican and Dixon (2008) found that *where* an individual accesses online news information is strongly associated with endorsement of racial stereotypes. Specifically, they found that individuals who endorse stereotypic beliefs are more likely to use non-traditional news websites (The Drudge Report, Huffington Post) as information sources (2008). On the other hand, those who use traditional new websites (e.g., The New York Times, CNN, The Washington Post) were less likely to endorse stereotypic beliefs (2008). It is likely that there are profound differences in the way such sites are framing race that would lead to such a discrepancy in stereotype endorsement. As such, it is hypothesized that:

H7: Minorities will be portrayed in stereotypic ways more often by non-traditional news outlets than by traditional news outlets.

Testing such a hypothesis is important as it can inform effects-based research in the future with respect to predicting a person's endorsement and Cultivation of racial stereotypes based upon the news websites that they ultimately visit. However, understanding the differences between websites is insufficient. Structural differences may also be present within each news website.

**Effects of story placement on racial representation.** Prior research bears out the notion that there are important differences in how racial groups are represented based solely upon the placement of a news story. Josey and colleagues (2010) discovered that the placement of a news story into the Top or Trending categories listed on a website's homepage also saw the most stereotypic portrayals of persons of color. Further, they discovered that the news deemed as most important (e.g., Top News) often overlapped a great deal with that which was most

consumed by news readers (e.g., Popular/Trending News). Probing for racial stereotypes and problematic portrayals across these structural elements is important from a Cultivation perspective because it explains not only how stereotypes are prominently placed, but also that they are being widely consumed by news readers. Given that prior research has found significantly more stereotypic portrayals of minorities in Top and Popular news, it is hypothesized that:

H8: News stories included in the Top News section on Internet news sites will contain more stereotypic portrayals of persons of color than that which are not included.

H9: News stories included in the Popular/Trending News section on Internet news sites will contain more stereotypic portrayals of persons of color than that which are not included.

Testing the above hypotheses will do much in aiding our understanding of how the structural components affect the presentation of race in Internet news. It will also inform our notions of what representations newsreaders are most often consuming. Yet, even with this information, other questions need to be explored for researchers to fully understand the portrayal of persons of color in Internet news.

### **Questions Regarding Minority Representation**

As important as testing the above hypotheses are, an important question is left unanswered by prior research that this dissertation addresses. This section poses a research question in order to fill in many of the gaps in the extant literature. One of the aims of this dissertation was to remedy the gaps present in the extant literature by expanding our understanding of racial stereotyping beyond the Race/Crime paradigm. Devine and Elliot (1995) make the case that scholars should adapt a flexible framework for understanding problematic

portrayals which account for stereotypes beyond those rooted in crime (e.g., undocumented immigrants, criminal perpetrators or terrorism). Within this dissertation, attempts were made to expand our understanding of the gamut of racial stereotypes in news and any presentations that may run counter to them. Accordingly, it is asked:

RQ1: What stereotypes beyond those derived from criminal activity will be present for persons of color?

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the hypotheses and a research question that are under examination in this dissertation. It laid out expectations regarding how racial groups will be represented under the proposed *Model of Racial Representation*, noting each specific *state* expected. Additionally, it presented a series of expectations regarding how representation may differ owing to structural aspects of Internet news. Finally it considered other, more pointed, questions and expectations for minority groups in their representation across Internet news. In Chapter Six of this text, each hypothesis will be tested and the research question answered. However, before moving on to a specific examination of each hypothesis and research question, it is first necessary to lay out the methods utilized in the present study. Chapter Five of this dissertation will now fully explicate the methods employed to examine these hypotheses and research questions.



## **Chapter Five: Content Analytic Methods for Studying Internet News**

Chapter Four of this manuscript detailed the questions that this study seeks to address. This chapter devotes its attention to explaining the procedures, training, and methods used in obtaining study results. Adhering to the scientific method, as called for by Krippendorff (2004) and others, should be the utmost goal of any content analyst. As such, in its execution, this study followed accepted content analytic practices in the training of research assistant coders, procedures of data analysis, capture of its sample, selection of units of analysis, and conceptualization of variables,

### **Methods of the Current Study**

Data collection and training of research assistant coders spanned nearly two years. To understand the methods employed, four areas of methodology will be considered. First, the procedures utilized in creating the content sample will be discussed in detail. Second, each unit of analysis and its importance to understanding the portrayal of race in Internet news will be explained. Third, the exact procedures carried out by research assistant coders will be given, including their recruitment, training, and reliability performance. Finally, the primary variables for analyzing content will be laid out by considering the rationale behind the judgment rules used by coders.

### **The Sampling of Internet News**

The first choices faced by content scholars are usually determining the overall time frame from which to draw a sample and the exact procedures used to capture it (Neuendorf, 2002). Owing to the content under consideration (e.g., racial portrayals) and the medium from which the news stories were taken, unique challenges were present in determining the sampling frame and

sampling method. The following section describes in detail the determination of a sampling frame and method by which the actual content was captured in the current study.

**Determining a sampling frame.** Prior to any coding or analysis, researchers must make important decisions regarding the frame from which they draw their sample. For a full review of sampling choices, see Krippendorff (2004) or Neuendorf (2002). Neuendorf (2002) characterizes a sampling frame as itemizing all units within a population. From here researchers must derive some way to select a unit for inclusion in the data set, preferably in a random manner (2002). With respect to performing a content analysis of news in both online and offline content, a sampling frame is the means by which stories/websites are identified and captured (e.g., recorded, transcribed, copied for analysis). The first step here, then, is to identify the days, weeks, or months that researchers will draw from to create their population sample. This study was conducted shortly after the election of America's first African American president. As such, determining the point at which to begin and end data capture was carefully considered. Capture began in 2009 following the 100-day mark of President Barack Obama's tenure in the White House. This was done to eliminate any halo effects that may have been present in the data set because of the historic nature of his election. As the goal of this content analysis is to see how race is portrayed on a day-to-day basis, it was deemed an appropriate place to begin data capture to avoid any overly positive or counter-stereotypic stories that might confound variables in the data set. Thus, data capture began on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 and continued until the end of May 2010, representing more than one full calendar year of data from which to draw data. As is detailed below, this study recorded the top twenty traditional and non-traditional news websites (see Table 1 for a detailed list) for a full 365 days at random times for each website during each day. Each website's homepage and any content accessible three hypertext links deep on each website

was captured daily. Previous analyses (Josey et al., 2010) used only the homepage and anything linkable using one mouse click. The current study seeks to have a well-rounded data set in order to capture a wider array of content (e.g., Entertainment News, Sports, Politics, etc.). Data were saved in a pdf format for later analysis. Using this method preserves not only the text on each webpage, but also flash movies, images, and related content for analysis. Although prior analyses (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; 2000b) have captured programming at times that correspond to traditional broadcast schedules (e.g., Morning, Afternoon, Evening, Late Night), this was deemed unnecessary for Internet news, which is updated throughout each day. Further, prior analyses have found no significant differences between time of data capture of Internet news on important variables used in the present study (Josey et al., 2010). Having detailed the general sampling frame from which this dissertation draws its data, it is now prudent to delve deeper into the exact methods of sampling utilized.

**Sampling methods of the current study.** As previously noted, this dissertation captured the top ten traditional and non-traditional news sites (explicated below and in Table 1) once per day in archival fashion using computer aided software that preserved each website's homepage and any content accessible within three hypertext links from the homepage. This ultimately yielded twenty total websites being captured for analysis. Determining which websites to capture was done using Alexa Media Research's website traffic ranking system (2009). Alexa ranks websites in order based on the number of visits they receive within a specified time period. For this analysis, the year-end rankings for 2008 were used in drawing the sample. This was done for both the top ten traditional and non-traditional news websites. Previously, Josey et al. (2010) successfully used this method of website selection in their analysis of the portrayal of race in online news. However, a word of caution should be emphasized when conducting

sampling using this sort of frame. Weare and Lin (2000) note that using such *popularity* rankings for website inclusion puts researchers at the mercy of outside sources and forces them to rely on overly broad categories of websites. Further, since website traffic can fluctuate, it is difficult to establish static rankings of news websites which will be guaranteed to remain the same over data capture and analysis (2000). Despite this, there is a relative degree of stability within the most popular news websites. Since the Josey et al. (2010) study and initial collection of this study's data, none of the news websites included in the sample have dropped out of the top 20 in popularity rankings (Alexa Media Research, 2015). Despite this, some of the websites have been rearranged in their popularity ranking.

**Drawing the current sample.** As previously mentioned, twenty news websites were archived for 365 days at random times as the sampling frame for the current study. This led to a repository of over 1,300 website capture points. Add to this the fact that all stories accessible within three hypertext links were captured and it becomes apparent that analysis of this population sample would be difficult. Because coding an entire year of web content would be unruly, at best, a composite month was created for each of the twenty websites captured, using a stratified random sampling technique. Within each website an equal probability sampling method was employed to create a sampling frame totaling a composite month. Thus, each website has stories from each representative day totaling a 31 day composite month. Within each website day (e.g., the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>), simple random sampling (SRS) was performed to select a website's day of the month and SRS was further used to select the stories coded for that day. This strategy is in keeping with prior analyses (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Josey et al., 2010; Kunkel et al., 1996; Potter et al., 1998; Wilson et al., 1998). A total of five stories and their respective homepage were selected for each coding website/day. This yielded 155 stories

for each website and a total of 3,100 stories total for analysis. Using this number of stories and sampling technique allows the current study to move beyond the more simple analyses performed by Josey et al. (2010) and draw detailed inferences regarding the portrayal of race. Further, it increases the overall reliability, validity, and generalizability of any inferences made. It is now necessary to detail how this study operationalizes the traditional and non-traditional news websites under analysis.

**Traditional news websites.** As detailed previously, this study captured the ten most frequently visited traditional news websites as part of the sample. Traditional news websites are defined by several important characteristics for the purposes of this dissertation. First, as with non-traditional news websites, traditional news websites must originate content within the United States. This is done largely to ensure that comparisons done along racial lines are ecologically valid. For example, if included for analysis, within the Guardian (a UK based website), stories about Blacks may contain differing stereotypes than those in US-based publications. Further, due to the unique ways that race is constructed in the US, non-US-based publications may refer to different groups using familiar terms (e.g., British Indians as Black). Obviously, making meaningful comparisons to US Census and Crime data would be problematic if non-US-based websites were included for analysis. Second, all traditional websites must have some off-line counterpart (e.g., CNN or The New York Times). An off-line counterpart is conceived as being in print or television media (e.g., traditional media forms). Finally, traditional websites must mirror content from their off-line counterpart. For a full list of traditional news websites, see Table 1.

**Nontraditional news websites.** Non-traditional news websites fall into two basic categories: news aggregators and non-aggregators that produce their own content. Further, they

must either have no offline counterpart (e.g., The Huffington Post) or originate concurrently with their offline counterpart. This study drew its sample from the ten most frequently visited non-traditional news websites based on Alexa Media Research's ranking system. However, because of the two types of non-traditional news websites, aggregator and non-aggregator websites were sampled. Included in the aggregator category are websites such as Google and Yahoo News. Aggregator websites do not originate a majority of their content and instead rely on other websites for content. They use algorithms to determine from which stories and websites to draw content. Thus, on such websites you are likely to see content from a range of content providers (e.g., The News-Gazette and ESPN). Non-aggregator websites have both original and reproduced content, but their stories are largely original. Websites in the non-aggregator category include news blogs such as The Huffington Post and The Drudge Report. For a complete list of non-traditional news websites included for capture, see Table 1. Having discussed the operationalization of news websites, it is prudent to consider the varied units of analyses to be utilized in the current study.

### **Units of Analyses**

Attempting to examine such a wide range of content, given the diverse nature of websites, could pose a unique challenge for determining a single unit of analysis. As such, a similar number of units of analyses used successfully by Josey et al. (2010) will be employed in analysis and coding. To yield the most explanatory power during analysis, five units of analysis will ultimately be utilized: homepage, story, headline, image, and character units. For each unit, a brief description of its importance and representative coder judgments will be offered. A full list of coding procedures and variables for consideration at each unit/level of analysis is located in Appendix A as well as the description of all analyzed variables later in this chapter.

**Homepage unit of analysis.** One of the most important units of analysis under consideration in the current study is the homepage level. Here the homepage refers to the base website that users are directed to when accessing some Internet news outlet. It represents the first content users encounter when they seek online news. Thus, it is an important unit to consider for coding because it may be the primary source of content users access. Also, the homepage provides links to stories it deems are important or *top news*. Thus from a theoretical standpoint, coding the homepage is crucial as it likely provides users with important cues as to the merit and overall worthiness of some news content over others. Not only does the homepage provide important cues as to the relative importance of certain topics over others, it additionally contains headlines, images, videos and the lead paragraphs for certain content. It is likely that such cues may ultimately affect users' consumption of later content. Finally, homepage content must be analyzed because it indicates prominence. The choice to publish some content over others on a homepage communicates to the consumer that some topics are more important than others simply by giving them prominence. Thus, it is important to code racialized portrayals on the homepage in addition to headline, story, image, and character levels. Imagine, for instance, if there are significantly more racialized portrayals linkable directly from the homepage than from other areas of the website. This would communicate to consumers that such portrayals, more so than others, are accurate and common in real life. On the homepage level of analysis, research assistants coded, among other things, the *presence* and *type* of racialized portrayal (e.g., illegal immigrant, terrorist or criminal), *frequency* of racial appearance, and *gender* breakdown.

**Story unit of analysis.** Using a coding scheme validated previously by Josey et al. (2010), coders were asked to make judgments about each news story in a holistic manner. Coders made a number of judgments regarding each story including which *section of the website* the

story was contained, the overall *story tone*, and the number and nature of *stereotypes* embedded within each story. The story level of analysis is important to investigate as stories serve as an elaboration to the attention-gaining device of headlines. Coding the entire story allows researchers to make accurate explanations and predictions regarding the nature of content in news environments. Further, this basic unit of analysis yields a good starting framework from which more nuance can be teased when combined with other levels of analysis such as image, headline, and character levels.

**Headline unit of analysis.** Authors such as van Dijk (1991) and Josey et al., (2010) have noted that news headlines serve as an important informational cue for readers. Further, the headline often serves as the only means of information gathering that media consumers utilize (van Dijk, 1991; Zillmann, Chen, Knobloch, & Callison, 2004). As a result, the headline is an important device that could either serve as unique information or as a selection criterion for readers in their decision making about which stories to consume. Examining the headline level of analysis is important for a number of reasons. First, in an online environment, many times, the headline itself is the only information that a reader is provided at the homepage of the news sites. In a new media environment where individuals may selectively expose themselves to information of varying dissonance with their existing beliefs (see Chapter Three), it is certainly important to examine headlines as an indicator of the portrayal of race and racial stereotyping. Second, headlines may serve as a priming device, which alerts a reader to the nature of a story and ultimately may color their perception of the information provided in the body of the article. Previous examinations of the role of priming in the perception of race-related issues have demonstrated powerful short-term effects on participants (Devine, 1989; Oliver, 2003). Thus, headlines may activate race-related schema, which in turn may color the interpretation that



readers have of the subsequent content. In analyzing headlines, coders examined mentions of *race*, *stereotype* presence, and positive or negative levels of *headline tone*.

**Image unit of analysis.** The next unit of analysis is the image level. Prior research has detailed the impact that images associated with news stories can have on the interpretation and selection of news content (Bucher & Schumacher, 2006; Mendelson, 2001; Zillmann, Knobloch, & Yu, 2001). Specifically, news articles that feature photographs are more likely to be read and for longer times than those that do not. Further, this effect is more pronounced when the photo is salient to the content of the article. Additionally, research has demonstrated the powerful effects of images on the interpretation and subsequent evaluation of persons of color and race-related issues (Dixon, 2006a; Oliver, 2003; Oliver & Fonash, 2002). Prior content analyses of online news have demonstrated that traditional news websites disproportionately represent Whites over minorities in images relative to the population, while featuring minorities in images associated with socially problematic content (Josey et al., 2010). Taken together, these findings point to the importance of examining images as a powerful locus of racializing persons of color. It is possible that individuals will use the images associated with stories as information to supplement or supplant that presented in the headline and story level. Lastly, it is common practice on many websites to use images along with headlines as a means of attracting viewers to stories. Having images associated with stories is a way to augment the importance of stories. At this level of analysis, coders made judgments regarding the *prominence* of an image (e.g., is it the first, second, third, or only image associated with the story), *number*, *race*, and *skin tone* of individuals pictured in an image on up to three images associated with each story.

**Character unit of analysis.** The final unit of analysis is the character level. One of the more important ways that race can be framed is through individual portrayals within news stories

(e.g., characters). Previous analyses have used this as a valid means of investigating the portrayal of race in both traditional (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) and online news settings (Josey et al., 2010). Using the characters as a unit of analysis allows researchers to make intergroup, interrole, and interreality comparisons similar to that done by Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) and Josey et al. (2010). Thus it allows researchers to probe for important differences in how race is constructed across groups and then check it against actual population data and crime reports.

From a practical standpoint, using characters as a unit of analysis enhances the comparisons that researchers are able to make. News stories, whether on television or in print, often have multiple characters featured within a single story. Using characters as a unit of analysis provides a larger sample from which to examine data. This allows for more meaningful comparisons and analyses. It also allows researchers to parse out the number of individuals being portrayed in each story, the race of each character, any stereotypes associated with a character as well as many other relevant aspects highlighted by an author in a story. The current study relied on a number of variables for coders to make judgments on the character level for up to four characters for each news story, including *character race, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, age, roles*, and any *stereotypes* associated with a character.

Each of these units of analysis adds much for the present study in the aims of understanding the portrayal of persons of color in Internet news. However, having so many units of analyses, each with multiple variables, presented challenges for analyses. As such, this study limited its analyses to the most relevant findings from each level for consideration.

## **Research Procedures**

To understand more fully the methods utilized in the current study it is necessary to explain the general recruitment and coding procedures used by this author. Coding procedures

will be explained by first describing the research assistants responsible for data collection and the training they received. A brief overview of the process employed to ensure inter-rater reliability will be offered next. Finally, a description of the coding procedure for the main data set will be laid out.

**Research assistant recruitment.** Research assistants were recruited from the undergraduate population at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign during the summer of 2010. A general letter of invitation was sent to undergraduates who had either worked with or had taken multiple courses from the author of this dissertation. Twenty undergraduates agreed to participate as research assistants in exchange for independent study credit within the department of communication during the Fall 2010 semester. Given this author's familiarity with the undergraduates, he was able to invite students who were academically ranked among the top 10% of current undergraduates who had received instruction from him, and all had overall GPAs above 3.4. Despite the selection being limited to former students of this author, the group, as a whole, was quite diverse. Assistants represented more than 5 majors across several university colleges. Gender was roughly representative of the university, as a whole, with half of assistants being male, half being female. The coders' age were similar  $M=19.75$  with little variation  $SD=.69$ . Given that this analysis is centered on the intersection of news media and race, it is important to acknowledge the racial composition of the assistants as a whole. Selecting individuals who are of one race could result in biased coding. Further, because part of this analysis is exploratory in nature (e.g., examining for new stereotypes/counter-stereotypes), having representatives from the groups under analysis is important. This is owing to the fact that persons of color are very familiar with the stereotypic things that are often associated with their group, more so than individuals who are not a member of their racial group. The research team,

as a whole, was very diverse. The research team was approximately 40% White ( $N=8$ ), 15% African American ( $N=3$ ), 20% Latino(a) ( $N=4$ ), and 25% Asian ( $N=5$ ). Having detailed the research assistants as a group, it is now time to examine the training they received.

**Research assistant pilot training.** It has been said that the training of research assistants is one of the most important tasks of the content analyst (Neuendorf, 2002). As such, the author took great pains to ensure proper training for all assistants. Training of the research assistants occurred in two phases. In phase one, assistants were sent several publications to familiarize them with the nature of racial stereotyping and the extant research that exists. This occurred near the end of July 2010 and continued until mid-August 2010. At the beginning of Fall semester in 2010, the research team met to discuss what they had read, gather their thoughts on existing research, and receive a hard copy of the project's codebook. This began the pilot testing and training portion of the current study. Through over 15 hours collaborative coding (e.g., analyzing an Internet news story as a group in a laboratory setting) during August of 2010, assistants learned to apply the rules of the codebook to Internet news stories, as well as familiarize themselves with the computer-assisted coding procedures. When assistants indicated to the research director that they fully understood the codebook materials, database software, and nature of how assignments would take place, full pilot training began.

Full pilot testing prior to reliability testing is critical to efficiently obtaining valid and reliable data (Neuendorf, 2002). The full pilot training for this study involved assigning all twenty coders a series of 60 news stories over four weeks in September 2010. The stories were pulled from archived news content that was not ultimately selected for reliability or final analysis. Each coder received the same set of stories weekly and was asked to apply the codebook and rules as best he/she could. Weekly meetings were held to discuss decisions made

by coders. Throughout this process, operational definitions and rules were adjusted in the codebook to aid assistants in their objectives. Neuendorf (2002) argues that this process is critical so that coders are comfortable in relying only on that which is contained in the codebook to ultimately make decisions about materials that are part of the final sample. In the final weeks of pilot testing, formal reliability measures were calculated to gauge coder progress towards reliably deploying the codebook. Once assistants were able to reach an  $\alpha=.70$  on variables of interest, the pilot training portion of coding was terminated.

**Obtaining reliable data and inter-rater agreement.** Phase two of research assistant training involved obtaining reliable inter-rater agreement on all variables of interest. Inter-rater reliability is the level of agreement observed among coders above and beyond that which one might expect by chance alone when making some judgment on a variable of interest (Neuendorf, 2002; Krippendorff, 2004). Inter-rater reliability is trumpeted as the foremost task of the content analyst, because without it one cannot trust any data produced (Neuendorf, 2002). It is developed in a number of different manners and calculated by using numerous statistical processes, each with its own advantages and disadvantages (2002). Some studies such as Dixon and Linz (2000a) prefer to perform some initial reliability training, followed by coders analyzing a small subset of the overall dataset each week to serve as a monitor on reliability throughout data analysis. Others maintain that before researchers allow coders to analyze anything from the main data set, all reliability testing of anywhere between ten to twenty percent of the overall sample must be completed while achieving acceptable levels of reliability (Neuendorf, 2002). This study did the latter. During the months of October and November of 2010, research assistants were asked to code approximately 10% of the overall sample. They all coded 300 stories drawn from the overall sample and met weekly to discuss their performance.

To determine the research assistants' performance, analysis of the group's agreement was performed using statistics that measure reliability, while accounting for the possibility of chance agreement. One of the main tasks of a content analysis is to determine which coefficient to rely upon (Neuendorff, 2002). Krippendorff's Alpha is widely recognized as a conservative and acceptable measure of reliability for content analysis (2002). It can be used for nominal, ordinal and interval data. Since this study has several forms of data across its variables, Krippendorff's Alpha was chosen as the coefficient of choice. Alphas were computed on a weekly and summative basis during reliability training. A full listing of the summative alpha values is presented in Table 2.

**Coding of the main data set.** After research assistants had consistently achieved an  $\alpha=.80$  level of inter-coder agreement for all important variables of interest, the actual process of analyzing the main data set took place. News websites and the stories associated with them were randomly pulled from the larger archived data set prior to this time by the research director as described above (e.g., study author). These stories and their home pages were randomly assigned to coders for evaluation. Research assistants then had the balance of the semester to work individually either in a University laboratory using their personal laptop computers or at any place of their choosing. Assistants entered data using FileMaker Pro data management software on their laptops, completing assignments weekly and uploading their datasets to a secure password-protected server. Assistants were asked, as they did in reliability testing, to view each homepage and associated stories alone and with the database codebook to aid in data analysis. Despite instructions to work individually on data analysis, weekly meetings were still held to address any problems that assistants encountered.

## **Variables Analyzed by Research Assistants**

The codebook, definitions, decisions, procedures, and variables used in this dissertation are fully detailed in Appendix A. The codebook for this dissertation contained over two hundred unique variables across all units of analysis. Research assistant coders were required to apply many of these variables repeatedly within each story for multiple characters or images.

Although the wide range of content coded by assistants was mentioned briefly in the prior section for each unit of analysis, not all were included in the final analysis. A brief description of the variables analyzed in Chapter Six of this volume (i.e., Results) is given below.

**General variables of interest.** Common among content analyses is often an effort to assess general areas of interest with variables. With respect to Internet news, these come in the form of categorical variables which attempt to separate certain content from others. Research assistants in the current study were asked to code a number of general purpose variables so that analysis later could probe for potential differences, should they emerge. The first and most broad variable given to coders was to assess to which *website* each story belonged ( $\alpha=.99$ ). This was done primarily to probe for differences that may emerge between traditional and non-traditional news websites in the frequency of stereotyping of persons of color originally posited by Melican and Dixon (2008). However, based upon prior research it was also predicted that within larger website categories, differences may emerge whereby one website (e.g., The New York Times) may publish more stereotypic content than others (e.g., The LA Times). Here assistants were presented with a categorical variable and asked to classify each story as being from one of the listed websites (See Appendix A).

Another general variable of interest for the current study involved characterizing where on any particular website a story was classified. It was posited that difference may emerge based

upon the broader *content areas* (e.g., Entertainment/Business) for persons of color, where stereotypes or counter-stereotypes could cluster in one type of story more so than others ( $\alpha=.90$ ). Here coders were presented with a categorical variable and asked to classify a story as belonging to one of fourteen content categories derived from prior analyses of Internet news (Josey et al., 2010). Accounting for these more general variables allows the current study to evidence content difference across and within websites.

**Determinations of race.** Of most import to the current study is reliably being able to draw distinctions between the portrayals of various racial groups. In order to allow for meaningful and easily understandable classifications of *race* within the current study, United States Census categorizations for race and ethnicity were employed (See Table 3). These amounted to categorizing a character, image, or headline as belonging to one of the following categories: White, Black, Latino, Asian, Arab, Native American, or Multi-racial (See Table 2 for alpha values for each). Prior analyses have relied on similar coding schemes with much success (Josey et al., 2010). However, classifying a character or image as belonging to one of these categories could prove to be problematic, if explicit rules are not laid out. As such, the current study relied on a series of decision making processes similar to Dixon and Linz (2000a, 2000b) and Josey et al., (2010) whereby assistants were required to determine race from pre-set rules (e.g., Surname, prior knowledge, explicit reference by author, skin tone in image) and additionally required to indicate how they came to each decision relying on a series of follow-up variables (See Appendix A for a full description of rules and variables). As can be seen in Table 2, coders were in substantial agreement for all race-related variables, far exceeding the traditional .80 alpha level required by conservative content analysts. Analysis for determining a character's race was performed at multiple levels in this study (i.e., Homepage, Image,



Character, & Headline). Also owing to the purpose of analyzing the portrayal of persons of color on a regular and routine basis, coders were asked to code a character as belonging to President Obama's family or not ( $\alpha=.98$ , *Barack* and  $\alpha=.97$ , *Michelle*). This was done so that analyses could create data that include and exclude the Obamas from analyses to examine whether the First Family had any substantive effect on the portrayal of African Americans. As detailed in Table 2 of this study, inter-coder agreement exceeded acceptable levels for all judgments of race ( $\alpha's > .80$ ).

**Other demographic variables.** In addition to coding the race of characters present in Internet news content, research assistants were asked to make determinations regarding a number of important demographic variables. Prior analyses of race in news have failed to account for important factors outside of the race of a character (Dixon & Josey, 2013). Specifically, *age* and *gender* are often ignored in fully laying out the portrayal of persons of color in news. This study seeks to remedy this shortcoming as it is entirely possible that certain stereotypes are more common to one gender/race than to another (e.g., Welfare Queen/Black Female vs. Tiger Mom/Asian Female). Assistants on the current study were asked to determine gender from a number of important factors (e.g., character name, image, or explicit mention) and confirm it using follow-up variables as noted in Appendix A. Agreement among coders proved to be quite high for gender ( $\alpha=.90$ ).

We were also interested in how stereotypes may differ among different age groups and as such asked coders to make determinations of character *age* as best they could. Assistants were asked to classify characters as being a child, teen, adult, or senior. Coding a character's age required either observable proof in images or explicit reference to age of a character or a group

the character belonged to. Coding age proved most difficult of all variables under consideration to achieve consistent agreement, yet an acceptable level of agreement was obtained ( $\alpha=.80$ ).

The final demographic variable that assistants judged involved a character's Socio-Economic Status. Prior analyses (Josey et al., 2010) have demonstrated that minority characters are disproportionately represented as poverty stricken. As such, it was prudent to examine which groups were more closely associated with poverty. In this instance *SES* was coded only as belonging to one of four categories: poor, middle class, wealthy, or not determinable from the information observed. Assistants were allowed to make determinations about *SES* from either explicit references to class status or from more implicit references outlined in Appendix A. As with other measures, reliability on this measure was quite high ( $\alpha=.91$ ).

**Story variables.** Although fewer in nature for the current analysis, research assistants were asked to make a number of judgments at the story level. Research has demonstrated that stories which are featured as top news are often highly consumed (Josey et al., 2010). Further, stories rated as popular or top news often contain the most stereotypic news (2010). As such, coders were asked to determine whether each story was featured on the *homepage* ( $\alpha=.82$ ), *top* ( $\alpha=.88$ ), and *popular* ( $\alpha=.95$ ) news sections of a website. This was determined by coders by examining the homepage associated with each story to see whether it was featured as a direct link from the homepage, top, or popular news sections. As noted above, agreement for all of these variables exceeded  $\alpha=.80$ .

**Tone of story and headline.** Important, as seen in prior analyses of Internet news is the overall positive and negative tone of a story when minorities are featured prominently (Josey et al., 2010). Specifically, minorities are more likely than Whites to be associated with stories that have a more negative tone (2010). As such, it is important to probe for difference in story and

headline *tone* in the current study. Research assistants were asked to rate *story* and *headline tone* on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from very positive to very negative. Coders were asked to infer tone from the adjectives used within the headline or story (e.g., Rose Above/Positive, Failed/Negative) as provided by the codebook and derived from prior analyses (See Appendix A). Agreement on headline and story tone proved relatively high ( $\alpha=.83$ ,  $\alpha=.81$ , respectively).

**Stereotypes and counter-stereotypes.** The current analysis is primarily concerned with the portrayal of persons of color in Internet news. Prior research has demonstrated extensively that persons of color are highly stereotyped in news stories (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Josey et al., 2010). However, few studies have examined news content for any possible manifestations of portrayals that run counter to stereotypic presentations of minorities (Dixon & Josey, 2013). This dissertation extends prior Internet studies and overcomes their shortcomings by including both presentations for analysis. Research assistants were asked to code for the presence of known racial *stereotypes* at the homepage, headline, story, and character levels. An exemplification of stereotypes within the data set is presented in Table 9. Included within these stereotypes were a number of race-specific stereotypes and traits observed by prior scholars (e.g., *Welfare Queen*, *Black Criminal*, *Arab Terrorist*). However, this study moved beyond established stereotypes to allow for alternative presentations. As such, it included variables intended to account for the presence of stereotypic portrayals beyond those examined by prior scholarship. Coders were asked to indicate the presence of racial stereotypes not explicitly mentioned in the codebook. If such *stereotypic content* ( $\alpha=.86$ ) was present, coders were then instructed to describe the stereotype, including its component parts (e.g., Muscular successful Black male). This was done to capture a more diverse, and possibly more contemporary, presentation of stereotyped minorities in news media.

However, the current analysis moves beyond an examination of stereotypes to consider the possibility that persons of color could be presented in counter-stereotypic manners. Research Assistants were asked to indicate whether a character, story, homepage, or headline contained information which was *counter-stereotypic* ( $\alpha=.92$ ). An exemplification of counter-stereotypes within the data set is presented in Table 9. Judgments of the presence of such content were made using a detailed set of guidelines described in the code book. Coders were required to not only indicate the presence of counter-stereotypic content, but also give a detailed description of its presentation. Open-ended measures of stereotype and counter-stereotype presentation were later re-coded into stereotype/counter-stereotype categories by research assistants. As noted previously for both *Stereotype* and *Counter-stereotype* identification, research assistants were in agreement above  $\alpha=.80$ .

**Character prominence.** The degree to which a person of color is featured as one of the most *prominent* or main characters in a story is important to consider. Prior studies have found marked differences between races in their overall prominence in images, headlines, and stories (Josey et al., 2010). It is important to consider prominence not only because of differences found in prior research, but because the degree to which a story or image focuses on a particular group of individuals communicates that group's vitality within the overall social structure (Harwood & Anderson, 2002). This dissertation examines prominence at two levels: character and image. Within the body of any story, research assistants were asked to code in rank order the four most prominent characters. Character *prominence* was determined by the number of mentions a character was given in a story. This included any pronominal, surname, or first name references (See Appendix A). Assistants were asked to count the number of times a character was mentioned in text then code the four most prominent in order using how many times they were

mentioned by name or pronoun as a guide. Agreement between assistants was sufficient for this judgment  $\alpha=.89$ . For the image level, research assistants were asked to evaluate prominence for the race of characters featured in images by coding from top to bottom. Hence any image that was larger than the others and close to the headline of a story was deemed the most prominent because it was nearer to the top of a story. Assistants then coded the next two images, if present, in the order in which they appeared from the top of the headline. This method of examining image prominence has been successfully used in prior research (Josey et al., 2010). Assistants were in agreement on which images were featured most prominently along all stories ( $\alpha=.98$ ).

Each of the variables of interest for this investigation provides useful insights into the ways that persons of color are represented in Internet news. They allow for the extension of prior research to the world of online content and extend prior understandings of stereotypic content. Research assistants proved adept at reaching sufficient agreement above that which could be expected by chance ( $\alpha=.80$ ) using an extremely conservative measure of inter-coder reliability (e.g., Krippendorff's Alpha).

### **Conclusion**

Adhering to the scientific method of content analysis is crucial to conducting analyses that are reliable, valid, and generalizable (Neuendorf, 2002). This chapter detailed the exact methods used to adhere to the scientific method and produce such results. The next chapter will detail the results that were obtained, ultimately testing the hypotheses laid out in the preceding chapter.

## **Chapter Six: How Internet News Frames Persons of Color in Stereotypic and Counter-Stereotypic Manners**

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have laid out in full the extant research regarding the portrayal of race in news, theoretical underpinnings including the proposed *Model of Racial Representation*, the expectations, and the method utilized in the current study. This chapter will fully explicate the statistical findings that emerged. The findings for this content analysis of the portrayal of race in Internet news are separated along the lines of the expectations and questions raised in Chapter Four of this text. First, a full explanation of the methods of analysis used to test each representation *state* in the new *Model of Racial Representation* will be offered. Following this, findings for the sample as a whole and each racial group will be provided, noting which *state* of representation each falls into at the time of this writing (e.g., *Neglect, Imbalance, or Symmetry*). Next, data detailing the structural influences of news placement on racial representation will be presented in full. Findings that expand our understanding of racial stereotypes beyond the race-crime paradigm will be offered as well. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a brief review of the overall findings leading to a discussion in Chapter Seven of their implications on present and future research.

### **Methods of Analysis for the Model of Racial Representation**

This section of data analysis deals with explaining the rationale and use of statistical tools as they apply to the new *Model of Racial Representation*. Chapter Three of this dissertation lays out in full the theoretical foundation for making delineations between representation *states* for each racial group under analysis. As previously stated, one of the largest shortcomings of prior models attempting to gauge the representation of persons of color in the mass media were their lack of testable definitions for each category or stage. This dissertation seeks to remedy such a

problem. The *Model of Racial Representation* relies on two prominent and useful effects-based theories (e.g., Cultivation and Social Identity Theory) in explaining the need to examine two key concepts when conducting analysis of racial representation: frequency of portrayal and valence of representation. Below it is fully explained how each is statistically operationalized to best characterize the *state* of representation for each racial group (e.g., *Neglect*, *Imbalance*, or *Symmetry*). For a quick overview of determining state, see Table 10.

### **Frequency and State of Representation**

According to the *Model of Racial Representation*, the first step in determining the *state* of representation in which a group resides is to perform inter-reality comparisons. This is accomplished by comparing the overall frequency of each group's portrayal within the sample to their frequency within the larger population as a whole. For this analysis, the percent of characters for each group within a sample is compared against each group's respective United States Census Data. This comparison is done using a Z-test of independent proportions at a 95% confidence interval. Thus, for each group a Z-test is conducted, yielding a specific Z-score, p-value, and percent difference in representation. Similar methods have been successfully used in prior analyses for such comparisons (Josey et al., 2010). It is advanced here that if a group is significantly under-represented from their actual rate in the US Census data, they cannot be in a *state of balance* and likely fall into a *state of Imbalance*.

The second step is to perform a simple inter-group comparison by examining the overall percentage each group makes up in the overall sample. From a Cultivation perspective, the sheer frequency, irrespective of comparison to population data, if too low means that consumers of a particular medium will be less likely to cultivate beliefs about a group of individuals in line with media portrayals simply because they are seen too infrequently. As such, it is operationalized

that if a group is represented in a sample population at a rate of three percent or less, they are necessarily severely under-represented, likely in a *state of Neglect*. Knowing a group's frequency relative to the overall sample data and in comparison to outside indicators of social reality do much for delineating the overall *state of representation*. However, one more facet is necessary to accurately categorize all groups within the *Model of Racial Representation*.

### **Valence and State of Representation**

As discussed in Chapter Three of this dissertation, Social Identity and Categorization Theories posit that not only does the frequency of portrayal matter, but also the type of portrayal presented (Mastro, 2009). The *Model of Racial Representation* uses representation type as a second testable element for categorizing into which *state* each group falls. Here representation type is conceptualized as the valence of portrayal. Valence in turn is operationalized broadly as the frequency of *stereotypic*, *counter-stereotypic*, and *stereotype neutral* portrayals observed in a sample relative to one another. It is argued that the distribution of such portrayals from more negative (e.g., stereotypic) to more positive (e.g., counter-stereotypic) should roughly follow that of a normal curve. Here all *stereotype neutral* portrayals should account for roughly 68% of all portrayals, corresponding to one standard deviation about the mean in a normal curve. *Stereotypic* and *counter-stereotypic* presentations should account for approximately 16% of all portrayals each, each corresponding to their respective tails of the normal curve. Testing the valence of portrayals against a normal curve allows for meaningful interpretations of deviance from balance in representations. It further allows for the delineation between groups that are in a state of *imbalance* or *symmetry*. To statistically test deviations from balance, a  $\chi^2$  test should be performed for each group.



## Imbalance Magnitude Index and Deviations from Balance

As useful as understanding the overall *state* of representation is to scholars, some might wonder how far out of a state of *Symmetry* each group falls. More to the point, some scholars may ask which racial group is the most *Imbalanced*. To account for such questions, the *Model of Racial Representation* relies on calculating an *Imbalance Magnitude Index*. This index measures, for each group under consideration, how far from *Symmetry* they lay. It is calculated by first examining the residuals found in prior chi-square tests performed for each group. Then an index score is computed using the following formula:

$$((R1_{\text{counter}} - R2_{\text{stereotype}} + R3_{\text{stereotype-neutral}}) / N_{\text{group representations}}) * 100 = \text{IMI}_{\text{score}}$$

This score is a result of subtracting the stereotypic residuals from the counter-stereotypic portrayals and adding the stereotype-neutral residuals. The resultant number is divided by the total number of representation for the group under consideration to yield a proportion of balance deviation for the group as a whole, which is multiplied by 100 to yield an easily interpretable result. On the whole, scores for this index can range from completely negative in valence (i.e., value of -100) to completely positive in valence (i.e., value of 100). A score of zero represents perfect *symmetry* of valence for a group.

The real utility of such a measure is that it, in conjunction with its preceding chi-square analysis allows scholars to delimit *symmetry* from *imbalance* for groups that are not in a state of *neglect*. Any group with an *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score greater than 16 or less than -16 is in a state of *imbalance*. Such scores indicate skewed portrayal distribution that significantly deviates from normality and thus a lack of *symmetry*. However, when groups do exist outside of this range, scholars must examine their data for the possibility of a bimodal distribution (e.g., equal levels of stereotypes and counter-stereotypes with extremely low neutral residuals).

Calculating a 3-way ratio of stereotype-to-neutral-to-counter-stereotype does this. Although in the current analysis, no such pattern emerged, bimodal data in such a form could have important implications for predicting effects from observed content (see Chapter Seven). For groups that have small sample numbers and are close to +/-16, a 95% confidence interval must be constructed to account for the possibility of sampling error before making judgments regarding a group's *state*. Lastly, this index allows scholars to not only determine a group's *state*, but also the magnitude of deviation from *Symmetry*.

Using the frequency of appearance, distribution and magnitude of portrayal valence allows scholars to holistically determine what *state* of representation each racial group falls into. By relying on statistical tools for delineation, the *Model of Racial Representation* avoids one of the shortcomings of prior content analytic approaches. Further, by utilizing the *Imbalance Magnitude Index*, scholars are able to not only determine a group's state within the overall model, but how far out of balance each group resides.

### **The State of Racial Representation in Internet News**

The primary goal of this dissertation is to examine the overall portrayal of persons of color within Internet news. In doing so, advance new theory for understanding such representations. The following sections lay out the overall findings of the study and *state* of representation for each racial group under analysis along the lines hypothesized in Chapter Four.

### **Overall Sample Considerations**

As mentioned in Chapter Five of this dissertation, the sample under analysis was drawn from twenty Internet news websites (See Table 1 for a detailed list). Each website and any linkable content accessible within three hypertext links was sampled for one year. A 31 day composite month was constructed for each website yielding 3,100 stories for analysis. Coders

were asked to code racial representations in the form of up to four characters at the homepage, headline, image and story levels of analyses. This ultimately yielded a grand total of 3,955 total characters. However, in many cases race was not readily mentioned or identifiable by coders. As such they were asked to code race only if it was readily identifiable. This yielded a total of 2,542 total characters in which a character's race could be singularly identified. Race was identified using decision schemes from prior research and along the same categories as those used by the US Census (See Table 3). Among the sample where race could be identified, persons of color were in the minority, occupying 30% of the overall sample (See Table 4). This figure was even lower once President and Mrs. Obama were removed from consideration (explained below). A Z-test of independent proportions confirmed that minorities on the whole are under-represented in Internet news when compared to US Census data  $Z=-7.19$  (-7% difference),  $p < .01$ . Having considered the sample overall, it is prudent to consider each racial group's representation along the lines of the expectations laid out in Chapter Four.

### **African Americans in Internet News**

As noted in Chapter Five of this dissertation, data collection occurred following the 100-day mark of President Obama's first presidential term. This was done primarily to avoid any halo effect that might surround coverage of African Americans at the time due to his election as the first Black president in US history. Further, as this study is primarily interested in how African Americans are represented in news on an everyday basis, analysis was performed both including and excluding the President and First Lady. A full breakdown of frequencies, Z-tests and  $\chi^2$  analyses for African Americans both including and excluding the Obama family can be found in Tables 4 and 5.

Hypothesis one states that African Americans would be portrayed in a state of *imbalance*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving more stereotyped valence of portrayal. To test this frequency and distribution tests were conducted. Blacks represented 12.4% of all characters coded in the sample (N=301). Thus, on cursory investigation, African Americans far exceed the 3% limit to be classified in a state of *Neglect*. However, it is possible that as a racial group, they still might be under-represented when compared to US Census data. A Z-test of independent proportions was conducted to test for this assumption. Contrary to what was expected by hypothesis one, Blacks were not significantly under represented when compared to population data,  $Z=-0.73$  (-0.49% difference),  $p=n.s.$  (See Table 4). Thus, preliminary evidence supports the notion that African Americans are not in a state of *Neglect*, however, follow-up analyses are needed to determine if they are in a state of *Symmetry* or *Imbalance*.

To ultimately determine what *state* of representation African Americans are presented in within Internet news, it is necessary to also examine the symmetry of stereotypic to counter-stereotypic portrayals. To do this, a  $\chi^2$  analysis was performed comparing the distribution of stereotypes, counter-stereotypes, and stereotype-neutral portrayals against a normal distribution. Analysis provides evidence in confirmation of hypothesis one. The valence distribution for African Americans significantly diverges from a state of *symmetry*,  $\chi^2(2, N=301)=76.7$ ,  $p=.001$  (See Table 5). Further, Blacks are depicted in twice as many stereotypic (e.g., criminal) portrayals (N=101) when compared to counter-stereotypic (e.g., Black CEO) portrayals (N=50). An *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score was calculated for African Americans. It yielded a score of -35.11, marking a significant stereotypic departure from *Symmetry*. It also places Blacks in the greatest state of stereotypic imbalance of all racial groups (See Table 5). Thus, although

African Americans are represented proportionally to their overall rate in the US population, their portrayal is clearly in a state of *Imbalance*.

**The Obama effect on the representation state of African Americans.** However, one may make the case that omitting the Obama family misses much regarding the nature of Black portrayals in Internet news. It is possible that including the first family would create a greater level of proportional representation, coupled with a greater balance of valence. To test this assumption, follow-up analyses were conducted. When including the Obama family in the total representation of African Americans, a notable 3% increase in sample frequency is observed (See Table 4). This ultimately results in Blacks being over-represented when compared to US Census data  $Z=4.46$  (2.98% difference),  $p<.01$  (See Table 4). Thus, the first family does have a markedly positive influence on the frequency of representation for African Americans.

However, their inclusion does little to affect the *imbalance* of valence for blacks. When including the Obama family in the overall distribution of valence for African Americans, a state of *Imbalance* is still observed,  $\chi^2$  (2,  $N=404$ ) = 43.9,  $p = .001$  (See Table 5). Here, Blacks are still seeing far fewer stereotype-neutral (e.g., black auto enthusiast) representations than expected ( $N=215$ ) and far more stereotypic (e.g., welfare queen) portrayals ( $N=105$ ). A follow-up investigation was conducted using the *Imbalance Magnitude Index*, which yielded a score of -19.97 (See Table 5). Although the Obama family does positively alter the counter-stereotypic (e.g., Black President) and overall frequency of African Americans, granting their inclusion does not move the group as a whole to a state of *symmetry*. In fact, it only moves their magnitude of stereotypic *imbalance* from most stereotypic to second-most stereotypic among all racial groups (Arabs become the most stereotypic).

### Latinos in Internet News

Hypothesis Two posits that Latinos would be seen in a state of *Imbalance*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more stereotyped valence of portrayal. To examine this, both frequency and distribution tests were performed. Latinos represented 6.6% of the overall sample (See Table 4). This is above the 3% cutoff for a state of Neglect, but appears lower than expected. A Z-test of independent proportions confirms that this is significantly below what one would expect in comparison to US Census data,  $Z = -12.13$  (-9.13% difference),  $p < .001$  (See Table 4). Thus, preliminary findings point to a state of *Imbalance*. When testing the distribution of valence among Latino portrayals, confirmation for hypothesis two is found. Latinos as a group diverge sharply from a state of *symmetry*,  $\chi^2 (2, N = 161) = 16.69$ ,  $p = .001$  (See Table 5). Further, Latinos see markedly stereotypic (e.g., migrant worker) ( $N = 41$ ) and markedly less stereotype-neutral (e.g., Latino student) portrayals than expected ( $N = 86$ ). An *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score was calculated for Latinos. It yielded a score of -18.94, marking a significant stereotypic departure from *Symmetry*. It also places Latinos in the third most deviance from valence balance (See Table 5). Taken together, both the frequency and valence distribution supports the notion that Latinos are portrayed by Internet news in a state of *Imbalance*.

### Asians in Internet News

Hypothesis three notes that Asians will be portrayed in a state of *Neglect*, underrepresented when compared to US Census data, receiving a more balanced-to-positive valence portrayal. Prior studies have noted that Asians as a racial group are often marginalized from issues of race (Josey et al., 2010) or underrepresented to the point of near invisibility in the mass media (Wong et al., 1998). To test whether this holds true for hypothesis three, the

frequency and distribution of valence were tested. Overall, Asians represented barely 3% (N=77) of all characters in the current data set (See Table 4). This certainly appears to be evidence in support of a state of *Neglect*. To further test this supposition a Z-test of independent proportions was conducted. In support of hypothesis three, Asians were significantly underrepresented when compared to US Census data,  $Z=-3.27$  (-1.39% difference),  $p < .01$  (See Table 4). These findings alone place Asians in a state of *Neglect*. However, one might still wonder about the valence distribution for this group. To test this a  $\chi^2$  analysis was performed comparing the distribution of stereotypes, counter-stereotypes and stereotype-neutral portrayals against a normal distribution. Analysis provides evidence in support to hypothesis three. The valence distribution for Asians appears to be normally distributed,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 77) =4.4$ ,  $p = n.s.$  (See Table 5). An *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score was calculated for Asians. It yielded a score of .78 providing evidence of remarkable valence balance. Prior research has shown that despite the severe underrepresentation of Asians as a racial group, their status as a perceived model minority often protects them from a severe imbalance of portrayals (Wong et al., 1998) or association with socially problematic issues (Josey et al., 2010). Thus it is not surprising to see balance for this group.

### **Arabs in Internet News**

Hypothesis Four posits that Arabs will be in a state of *Imbalance*, represented fairly when compared to US Census data while receiving a more stereotyped valence portrayal. Similar to other groups, both frequency and distribution tests were conducted. Arabs represented 4.4% of the overall sample, far more than the cutoff for a state of *Neglect*. In comparison to US Census data, a Z-test of independent proportions reveals partial support for hypothesis four. In relation to their actual rate in the US population, Arabs are significantly overrepresented,  $Z=14.32$ (3.21%

difference),  $p < .01$  (See Table 4). Thus on the surface, at least with respect to the overall frequency of representation, it appears as if Arabs are more than fairly represented. However, hypothesis four also speculates that Arabs will receive more stereotypic coverage despite the mere frequency of representation. To test this, a chi-square test was performed, revealing support for an *Imbalance* in valence distribution,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 107) = 14.60, p = .001$  (See Table 5). Specifically in support of hypothesis four, Arabs saw significantly more stereotypic (e.g., terrorist) portrayals than expected ( $N=31$ ) and far fewer stereotype-neutral (e.g., Arab teacher) portrayals than expected ( $N=56$ ). An *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score was calculated for Arabs. It yielded a score of -25.98, marking a significant stereotypic departure from *Symmetry*. It places Arabs in the second greatest state of stereotypic imbalance of all racial groups (See Table 5). Thus, taken, as whole, significant evidence exists in support of hypothesis four. Arabs are currently represented in a state of *Imbalance* in Internet news.

### **Native Americans in Internet News**

Hypothesis Five predicts that Native Americans will be in a state of *Neglect*, underrepresented when compared to US Census Data and see an imbalance in the distribution of stereotype valence. Overall, Native Americans occupied very little of the overall sample at .5% (See Table 4). This is well below the 3% cutoff for *Neglect* and seems to provide evidence in support of hypothesis five ( $N=14$ ). Follow-up test provide more evidence of this underrepresentation,  $Z=-1.99(-0.44\% \text{ difference}), p < .05$  (See Table 4). Thus from a mere frequency perspective, Native Americans are clearly in the *Neglect* state, barely achieving any representation in the current sample. One might wonder what the distribution of stereotype valence was for Native Americans. Chi-square test failed to reveal any significant deviation from normality,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 14) = 0.97, p = .n.s.$  (See Table 5). However, this might be in large part



due to the extremely small frequencies observed. On a visual level, stereotypes (e.g., Gambler) (N=3) far outnumbered counter-stereotypes (e.g., attorney) (N=1) for Native Americans. Yet despite this, a lack of significance fails to shed light in support of the latter half of hypothesis five. Clearly Native Americans are in *Neglect*, however due to the small sample size of Native Americans, it was impossible to adequately test the second half of Hypothesis five.

### **Whites in Internet News**

Hypothesis Six predicts that Whites will be in a state of *Symmetry*, fairly represented when compared to US Census data and receive a balanced distribution of stereotype valence. To test this, frequency and distribution analyses were conducted. Overall, Whites represented 72.8% of all characters within the sample (N=1776). Thus, on a cursory level, partial support exists for hypothesis six. To further test this notion, a Z-test of independent proportions was conducted (See Table 4). In support of initial predictions, Whites were overrepresented when compared to US Census data,  $Z=7.91$  (7.69% difference),  $p < .01$  (Detailed in Table 4). Thus, it appears that Whites clearly are not in a state of *Neglect*. To probe further, a chi-square analysis was performed to test valence distribution. Follow-up analyses reveal that Whites indeed find favorable valence distribution,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 1,776) = 73.71$ ,  $p = .001$  (See Table 5). As a group, Whites see far fewer stereotypic (e.g., intolerant) portrayals (N=206) and far greater stereotype-neutral (e.g., White mechanic) representations (N=1,368) than one would expect. An *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score was calculated for Whites. It yielded a score of 8.66, illustrating that Whites are in a remarkable state of *Symmetry* (See Table 5). Taken together, there exists much support that Whites are represented in a state of *Symmetry*.

When examining the current data for support of the *Model of Racial Representation*, groups largely fell in line as predicted. As such, the *state* categories seem to have achieved both

face and convergent validity with prior research. This ultimately advances our understanding of how persons of color are represented in Internet news.

### **Structural Differences in Representation**

Chapters Two and Three noted that the structure and nature of Internet news could have a dramatic impact on the way persons of color are represented. Both the *type* of website (e.g., Traditional vs. Non-Traditional) and placement of news matter. The following sections take up hypotheses related to the effect of news structure on racial representation.

#### **Website Type and Racial Representation**

Prior research has demonstrated that the type of website that produces news may have an impact on an individual's cognitions regarding persons of color (Melican & Dixon, 2008). For this study, the top 10 Traditional and Non-Traditional news websites were analyzed. This was done largely to probe for potential content differences with respect to persons of color. It is posited that such content differences may drive differential attitudes towards persons of color or that differential attitudes may drive news consumption across these sites (2008). Regardless of which is the case, it is important to probe for any such differences. Hypothesis Seven predicts that persons of color will be portrayed in more stereotypic manners by Non-Traditional news outlets when compared to Traditional ones. To test this assumption, a series of chi-square analyses were performed (See Table 6). Given that this hypothesis concerns news outlets as a whole, differences in the amount of stereotypes at the story level was conducted. In support of hypothesis seven, Non-Traditional websites were found to be significantly more stereotypic in their portrayal of persons of color,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 321) = 15.54, p = .001$ . Non-Traditional news website stories had significantly more stereotypic content ( $N=163$ ) than Traditional or above that expected by chance (See Table 6). To test this imbalance further, a follow-up test was conducted

to examine the overall distribution of stereotypes within Non-Traditional news websites. One might argue that although Non-Traditional sites purvey more stereotypic content, that they on the whole, might have both more neutral and counter-stereotypic portrayals to be more balanced in nature. A chi-square test revealed that Non-Traditional sites were significantly *imbalanced*,  $\chi^2$  (2, N= 384) =24.89,  $p = .001$ . Non-Traditional sites had significantly more stereotypic content than one would expect by chance (N=92) and significantly less stereotype-neutral content (N=218). Traditional News websites saw a more balanced distribution  $\chi^2$  (2, N= 382) =1.12,  $p = .n.s$ . Thus on the whole support was found for Hypothesis seven, Non-Traditional websites portray persons of color in more stereotypic manners than traditional sites and see imbalance within their content.

### **Story Placement and the State of Racial Representation**

As important as probing for differences across website type is, much can be learned from news story placement. Prior analyses have gleaned that stories rated as important by news organizations and the ones most consumed contain many racial stereotypes (Josey et al., 2010). As such, it is important to analyze how persons of color are represented in *top* and *popular news*. As prior analyses have demonstrated, often times, *popular* news and *top news* have a level of overlap. Evidence of such an overlap would provide powerful evidence that theoretical tools gleaned from agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1974) or Cultivation (Gerbner et al., 1980) still hold relevance in a new media environment. In the current sample over 60% of all *popular* stories were also featured as *top news* by the content producers. Thus a great deal of overlap is seen between the two, lending credence to the notion that what gatekeepers deem as important is often among the most consumed. Hypothesis eight posits that stories deemed newsworthy by gatekeepers would contain more stereotypic portrayals of persons of color. To test this a chi-

square analysis was performed. Analysis finds support for hypothesis eight, persons of color were portrayed in significantly more stereotypic ways in *top news* than one would expect,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 282) = 879.31, p = .001$  (See Table 7). Further, follow-up analyses revealed that this trend holds true for the most consumed or *popular news* as well,  $\chi^2 (2, N= 282) = 20.1, p = .001$ . This provides evidence in support of hypothesis nine. Taken together, findings from the current study find that often that which is deemed most newsworthy by gatekeepers is consumed by newsreaders. Further, news which is featured as *top* or *popular* news is highly stereotypic in nature.

### **Beyond the Race-Crime Paradigm**

The current study has moved beyond prior work in the extant literature, expanding our understanding of persons of color in Internet news. It has additionally overcome many of the shortcomings present in prior content studies. One of the largest gaps in the extant literature noted in Chapter Two of this dissertation is a need to consider racial stereotypes outside of the area of crime news. Although little is known regarding stereotypes outside of the race-crime paradigm, it is important to investigate for all instances of stereotypic traits (Devine & Elliot, 1995). This dissertation seeks to do so by analyzing not just macro-level stereotypes, but also stereotypic traits/presentations of persons of color.

Research Question One asks what stereotypes beyond those found in criminal activity will be present for persons of color? To answer this a consideration of each minority group's, stereotypic traits/associations will be laid out. For a full account of each group see Table 8. For each group a series of traits were coded, each trait or association was non-exclusive and as such various characters may have more than one stereotype trait/association coded. Some traits/associations overlap and are noted in Table 8. Native Americans saw a total of one

stereotype trait: *Gambling* (N=3). Similarly, Asians saw a preponderance of stereotype traits (N=12) fall into the category of associations with the *scientific* community (N=10, 83%). In a similarly monolithic distribution, Arabs saw an exclusivity of stereotypic representations cluster around the trait of *terrorism* (N=31). Latinos and African Americans saw a greater dispersion of stereotypic representations.

Latinos saw a great number of stereotypic associations involve *crime* (N=31, 75%). This overlapped and was followed closely by associations with traits that showed Latinos as *undocumented* immigrants (N=21, 51%). Not surprisingly, Latinos were associated with stereotypes involving *gangs* (N=16) and *drugs* (N=16), representing 39% of all stereotypic associations. Latinos also saw associations with professional *athletics* (N=6, 14%) and *migrant* work (N=8, 13%). The current study saw evidence of several new and unique stereotypic traits for Latinos in Internet News.

African Americans had fewer association categories than Latinos, yet saw greater frequency for each trait (See Table 8). Lending credence to the notion that Blacks are primarily stereotyped as criminal perpetrators, the current study found that 64% of all stereotypes for Blacks involved perpetrating *crime* (N=64). This was followed by portraying African Americans as highly *athletic* (N=20, 20%). African Americans were also stereotyped as being *poor* (N=14, 14%) and on *welfare* (N=3, 3%). Finally, Blacks were associated with *drugs* (N=14), albeit less so than Latinos.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter set out to test the hypotheses laid out in Chapter Four of this dissertation. It additionally sought to answer the Research Question regarding stereotype traits. The findings presented in this chapter provide evidence for the validity of theorizing racial representations as

*states* as opposed to categories or static stages. Further, analysis provided above gives explication to the representation of persons of color within the *Model of Racial Representation*. As noted, substantial evidence exists that only Whites exist in a *state* of *Symmetry* in Internet news. The next chapter of this dissertation will discuss the implications of each finding in more detail. Further, a discussion of the now tested *Model of Racial Representation* will be provided. Limitations and directions for future research will be offered before concluding remarks are made.

## **Chapter Seven: Discussion of Findings with the Model of Racial Representation and Conclusions**

The study of how persons of color are represented within news media has a long and valuable place within mass communication scholarship (Dixon, 2006a, 2006b; Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Entman, 1992, 1994; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Gilliam, Iyengar, Simon, & Wright, 1996; Johnson & Dixon, 2008; Josey et al., 2010; Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). Despite its importance, research into the content and effects of racialized portrayals of persons of color within Internet news remains in its infancy (Dixon & Josey, 2013; Josey et al., 2010; Melican & Dixon, 2008). With the exception of Clark's (1972) stages model for understanding how African Americans are represented in entertainment media, no comprehensive framework for understanding racialized portrayals within the mass media has been developed until now.

The results of Chapter Six of this dissertation represent the first major attempt by content analytic scholars to address both of the shortcomings listed above. This project builds upon methodological innovations of prior scholarship (Dixon & Linz, 2000a), preliminary investigations into the intersection of race in Internet news (Josey et al., 2010) and prior theoretical understandings of how portrayals can best be categorized (Clark, 1972). Further, it incorporates calls from scholars to rethink our approach to characterizing stereotypic content (Devine & Elliot, 1995), while including racial groups often neglected by prior scholarship (Josey et al., 2010; Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003; Wong et al., 1998).

This chapter reviews the results of analyses completed and reported in Chapter Six of this dissertation. It expands on the relevance of each finding to the overall study of race in Internet news and the mass media in general. Additionally, it provides explanations as to how the new

*Model of Racial Representation* is a significant advancement and theoretical tool for content analytic scholars. Consideration is also given to how researchers may utilize this model for work in the effects-based world. First, the current state of racial representation within Internet news will be assessed relying on the *Model of Racial Representation* with particular attention paid to the findings for each racial group. Results obtained when examining the structural elements of Internet news' effects on stereotypic portrayals will then be explained fully, followed by an explanation of how stereotype traits for each racial group emerged. Next, a review of the *Model of Racial Representation* will be offered in light of this dissertation's findings. The model's validity as a scholarly tool will be discussed, paying particular attention to its effects-based tenants, reliance on statistical tools, and advantages over prior theorizing. Limitations of the current study as well as direction for future effects based research will be considered before concluding remarks are offered.

### **The Current State of Racial Representation in Internet News**

To adequately categorize the *state* of racial representation within Internet news it is necessary to comment that, overall, findings indicate a great level of imbalance or neglect for minority portrayals (See Table 5). Each racial group either made up a small percentage of the overall sample (e.g., Asians), were represented significantly differently than one would expect based upon social reality indicators (e.g., Latinos) or were seen with a significant amount of valence imbalance (e.g., Blacks). Even when considering the overall sample of 2,542 characters across units of analysis where race could be coded, the rate of portrayal for minorities diverged significantly from reality. This is in keeping with prior research (Josey et al., 2010) on Internet news. However, to fully unpack this *imbalance* of racial representation, findings for each hypothesis and research question will be revisited, situating them within the extant literature.



## **The State of African American Imbalance**

Prior studies examining the portrayal of Blacks in news content have discovered a consistent picture of African Americans being associated with crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, Entman, 1994; Josey et al., 2010). Some studies suggest that African Americans are under-associated with positive roles (e.g., Police Officers) while over-associated with negative stereotypes such as criminality or poverty (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Josey et al., 2010). However, newer studies suggest that such portrayals might be improving for African Americans (Dixon & Williams, 2015). In Internet news, Blacks have been found to be under-represented when compared to US Census data, while still being associated with socially problematic issues such as crime (Josey et al., 2010). Findings from the current study found that Blacks as a group were under-represented when compared to US Census data, although not significantly so (See Table 4). This analysis draws from a multitude of content areas within news websites including sports and entertainment sections. It is possible that this broader sampling frame explains why African Americans see a more accurate reflection in frequency representation than in prior analyses that have focused on other areas such as crime (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) or victimization (Sorenson, Manz & Berk, 1998). Additionally, this study was conducted after the election of America's first Black President, Barack Obama. This may have driven more coverage of African Americans in general because journalists may have been seeking to cover issues that affect African Americans more so than that found in prior analyses.

Data from this study also indicate that African Americans as a group were in a *state* of extreme imbalance. Chi-square analyses revealed that Blacks' representation diverged significantly from a normal distribution (See Table 5). Specifically, African Americans had significantly less neutral presentations and significantly more stereotypic portrayals than one

would expect by chance alone, marked by a the largest *Imbalance Magnitude Index* value of groups within the sample (See Table 5). Further, these portrayals were characterized by traits associated with *welfare*, *crime*, and *poverty* (See Table 8). Thus, although African Americans were not significantly underrepresented, they were the most *imbalanced* group in Internet news, associated with socially problematic and highly stereotypic issues. This offers support for hypothesis one and is keeping with the extant literature (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Entman, 1994; Josey et al., 2010).

Unfortunately, even when including stories that feature President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle, this trend remains. The Obama family did provide the sample with more stereotype-neutral and counter-stereotypic stories, while increasing their sheer rate within the sample, yet this had little effect on the overall *symmetry* or *magnitude of imbalance* (See Table 8). When including the Obamas, Blacks as a racial group saw a 3% increase in their overall representation, making them significantly overrepresented (See Table 5). However, these representations only marginally lowered the *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score (See Table 8). Even under these conditions, African Americans were the second-most stereotyped group within the sample (Arabs became the most stereotyped). Simply put, Blacks as a racial group continue to be the most vilified racial group in news and are currently in a state of *imbalance*. This is similar to what scholars have found for African Americans in entertainment media as well (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000).

### **The State of Latino Imbalance**

Previous studies examining the portrayal of Latinos in news media are fewer in number than those for African Americans; however, they have painted a similarly negative picture (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Josey et al., 2010; Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003; Sorenson et al.,

1998). Specifically, Latinos are less likely to be seen in sympathetic roles (e.g., victims of crime) and more likely than other groups to be seen in socially problematic roles (e.g., undocumented immigrants or criminals). Further, prior studies have provided evidence that Latinos as a group are portrayed in news at a rate far below what one would expect when compared to US Census data (Josey et al., 2010). Data from the current analysis found a similar pattern. Latinos were significantly underrepresented in the current sample (See Table 4). Further, the valence of portrayal was highly imbalanced (See Table 5). Specifically, Latinos had significantly less neutral presentations and significantly more stereotypic portrayals than one would expect. This led to an *Imbalance Magnitude Index* value of -18.9, making them the third most *imbalanced* group within the sample. Further these portrayals were characterized by traits associated with *undocumented immigration, crime, gangs, migrant work, and drugs* (See Table 8). This state of portrayal makes sense given the fact that Latinos have historically been seen in less desirable roles in the mass media (Mastro, 2009) often revolving around issues of ethnic blame (Josey et al., 2010). Thus, findings are keeping with the extant literature and demonstrate that Latinos are in a state of *Imbalance*, supporting hypothesis two.

### **The State of Asian Neglect**

Although research into the portrayals of Latinos and African Americans is relatively robust, the same cannot be said for Asians. Asians historically have been characterized as hard working, obedient, and *model minorities* (Josey et al, 2010; Wong et al., 1998). Studies show that this often manifests itself as a lower percentage of overall news coverage and lack of association with socially problematic issues (2010). Wong et al. (1998) notes that Asians are often relegated to limited roles in media coverage. These roles, in turn, often reaffirm Asians as hard-working business owners who are intelligent and savvy. However, these portrayals are

often very sparse in frequency (Josey et al., 2010; Wong et al., 1998). Findings from the current study are keeping with these findings. Asians occupied a mere 3% of the overall sample and were significantly underrepresented when compared to US Census data (See Table 4). Further, when examining the balance of valence within these infrequent portrayals, significant differences failed to emerge (See Table 5). This is further explained by an *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score of .78, which is the closest to balance or 0 observed in the sample. However, it is worth noting that among all stereotypic portrayals seen for Asians as a group, most were associated with the field of science. Simply put, findings indicate that Asians, while portrayed as a model minority group, remain in a state of *neglect*, seldom seen in Internet news portrayals. This confirms hypothesis three and is in keeping with prior research.

### **The State of Arab Imbalance**

After 9/11, an increased focus on Arabs as a racial group has occurred within the context of scholarly inquiry. Prior analyses have found that Arabs are associated with socially problematic issues such as terrorism (Dixon & Williams, 2015; Josey et al., 2010; Person & Musher-Eizenman, 2005). Specifically, Dixon & Williams (2015) found that Arabs were more likely to be portrayed as terrorists than reports on terrorism would suggest is accurate. Josey et al. (2010) found that Arabs occupied a significant proportion of their sample and were more likely than any other group to be associated with acts of terrorism. In the current study, Arabs were found in a state of *imbalance*. Arabs were overrepresented when compared to US Census data. However, their 3% overrepresentation was marred by a significant *imbalance* towards stereotypic valence (See Table 5). Within these representations, Arabs had more stereotypic coverage and substantially less stereotype-neutral portrayals than expected. This caused Arabs to be the second most stereotyped group with an *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score of -25.98.

Further, of all stereotypic presentations found for Arabs, all were associations with acts of terrorism. In sum, the current findings are consistent with the extant literature. Arabs, while seeing greater coverage than one would expect, are in a state of *Imbalance*, stereotyped negatively, and associated with acts of terrorism.

### **The State of Native American Neglect**

Native Americans, although the indigenous group to North America, have historically made up a small proportion of news coverage (Merskin, 1998). Previous investigations into the portrayal of Native Americans in news media have found a near-absence of the group from the overall media landscape (Heider, 2000; Josey et al., 2010). However, studies that have reported findings for Native Americans explain that when seen, stories largely involve sporting mascots, alcoholism, gambling, and cultural festivals (Ganje, 2003; Heider, 2000; Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez & Chao, 2003). Although less is known about Native Americans as a racial group within news coverage, it was expected that Native Americans would be in a state of *Neglect*. As detailed in the previous chapter and seen in Table 4 of this manuscript, Native Americans occupied a relatively small proportion of the overall sample (i.e., .5%). This precluded many more robust tests of statistical significance because counts were too low within many cells for comparisons. However, a Z-test of independent proportions found Native Americans as a group to be significantly underrepresented when compared to US Census data. This, combined with their very low overall percentage in the sample, provides support for a state of *Neglect*. The small N observed within our sample made it impossible to adequately test for valence distribution (See Table 5). However, Native Americans had an *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score of -10.71, indicating that they received more stereotyped portrayals than not. Indeed, an inspection of the stereotypic portrayals to counter-stereotypic portrayals finds a

more than 3-to-1 ratio of stereotype-to-counter-stereotype that revolve around stereotypes of gambling. In sum, although tests failed to reveal statistically significant imbalance in valence, a visual inspection of the data and *Imbalance Magnitude Index* calculations indicate that Native Americans receive far more stereotypic coverage, while being significantly underrepresented in comparison to US Census data. This provides evidence of a state of *Neglect*. These findings are both expected and in keeping with prior research.

### **The Symmetrical State of Whites in Internet News**

As the largest racial group within the United States, Whites have seen markedly more positive and fair portrayals in the mass media (Clark, 1972; Lipsitz, 1998). Prior studies have found that regardless of media type or form, Whites occupy a position of privilege, avoiding issues of ethnic blame (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Josey et al., 2010), while occupying socially desirable roles such as police officers (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) or reporters (Heider, 2000; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003). Further, previous content analyses have found that Whites tend to be overrepresented when compared to US Census data (Dixon et al., 2003; Josey et al., 2010). These findings from the extant literature led us to expect that Whites will be in a state of *Symmetry*. Indeed, findings from the current analysis support this notion. Whites occupied a majority of all characters within the sample. Further, when compared to US Census data, Whites were significantly overrepresented (See Table 4). Tests revealed that Whites received markedly more neutral portrayals than expected while seeing less stereotypic portrayals. This favorable portrayal is evidenced further when considering that Whites had an *Imbalance Magnitude Index* score of 8.66, the most positive in the sample. Although the chi-square tests revealed significant difference as reported in Chapter Six, the large number of neutral presentations largely drove this. Thus, it appears that Whites are clearly in a state of *Symmetry*. This is in keeping with the

extant literature and the expectations of this study. In sum, Whites occupy a place of privilege within our media landscape, avoiding socially problematic associations, while seeing largely objective/neutral depictions within the mass media.

Having spent time discussing the portrayal of racial groups, we can now turn our attention to other issues concerning racialized portrayals. Most notably, how the structure of news may influence the portrayal of race. Below these facets of Internet news and their effects are explored.

### **Structural Influences on Racial Representation State**

Internet news content originates from a multitude of various websites. These websites, in turn, are not always similar in nature (Melican & Dixon, 2008; Josey et al., 2010). Further, within each website lies content promoted by gatekeepers/editors and that which is most consumed by readers. Below, these structural aspects of news are explored in light of the findings presented in Chapter Six of this manuscript.

### **Non-Traditional News' Problematic Representation of Persons of Color**

Prior research examining difference among expressed *Modern Racism* among university students has found that individuals who consume news from Non-Traditional (e.g., Huffington Post) outlets express significantly more prejudice than those who get their news from Traditional (e.g., New York Times) outlets (Melican & Dixon, 2008). Prior analyses into the content of Internet news had insufficient variety and too small sample sizes to yield any meaningful comparisons regarding content differences among the two (Josey et al., 2010). The current study acknowledges the importance of examining such distinctions and, as such, included a sufficient number of Non-Traditional sites for meaningful comparisons. Such difference might serve to explain the findings of Melican and Dixon (2008) and are important, given that selective process

theories predict that individuals may rely on existing attitudes when choosing where to gather news.

This dissertation found a significant difference between the numbers of racial stereotypes across types of news outlets (See Table 6). Specifically, Non-Traditional news outlets presented persons of color in a significantly more stereotypic manner than did Traditional ones. Further, follow-up tests revealed that within each website type, Traditional news outlets were more likely to have a balance in stereotype valence. However, Non-Traditional news outlets were significantly more likely to have an imbalance of stereotype valence. Simply put, Traditional news websites had a relatively balanced distribution of stereotypes, stereotype-neutral content and counter-stereotypes, close to a normal distribution. This is in keeping with what was expected. Non-Traditional news outlets characterize persons of color in highly problematic and stereotypic ways. In sum, the findings from this study may explain what Melican and Dixon (2008) observed. It makes sense that individuals may cultivate stereotypic beliefs from visiting sites with more stereotypic portrayals (i.e., Non-Traditional). However, because causality was not demonstrable within their survey, it is also likely that individuals with stereotypic beliefs self-select website types corresponding with their existing beliefs. Thus, individuals who hold more stereotypic beliefs regarding persons of color might choose Non-Traditional news because it causes the least amount of cognitive dissonance for them. Individuals less likely to endorse stereotypic beliefs would select the more balanced coverage presented within Traditional news sites.

However, the exact reasons for this disparity are unclear. It is possible that Traditional news sites are rooted within traditions of objectivity and have greater editorial oversight, which may prevent such distorted coverage. It is possible that Non-Traditional sites do not adhere as



strictly to such norms or lack oversight. Yet, the exact reasons for this distinction are unknown because the current data cannot speak to the editorial processes within organizations. Further, given the fact that Traditional media and Internet sites have been shown to be purveyors of stereotypic content as well (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Josey et al., 2010), this explanation does not seem wholly adequate. As noted in the concluding sections of this chapter, more research is needed before the reasons behind such differences are fully elucidated.

### **Placement, Popularity, and Problematic States of Representation**

One of the largest and most powerful critiques of the Cultivation Hypothesis in a new media environment is that it assumes a largely captive and passive audience (Potter, 1993). In a new media environment where Internet news can be selectively consumed, it is possible that the news deemed most important by media gatekeepers is not that which is ultimately read by consumers. Further, scholars have noted that a person's Social Identity may lead them to differentially consume or perceive news in ways not accounted for by the Cultivation Hypothesis (Mastro, 2009). For Cultivation to remain relevant, individuals must be consuming information that gatekeepers deem important. The current study finds support for Cultivation's relevance in an Internet news environment. As detailed in Chapter Six, more than 60% of the most-consumed stories across Internet news outlets were also ones selected as top news by media gatekeepers. Thus, scholars must examine not only what is most consumed but also what is deemed top news by media outlets online.

Prior research has demonstrated that top and popular news sections of Internet websites often contain highly stereotypic portrayals of persons of color (Josey et al., 2010). As such, we expected that Top and Popular news sections on Internet news sites would contain more stereotypic portrayals of persons of color. Findings from this study support this notion. Analysis

of top news stories revealed that they contain markedly more stereotypic portrayals than one would expect. Further analysis found that the most-consumed stories (e.g., trending news) portrayed persons of color in significantly more stereotypic ways than one would expect. Taken together, these findings replicate those found in the extant literature and provide evidence that the Cultivation Hypothesis remains relevant in an environment that may promote selectivity in news choice.

The reasons behind such distortion in top and popular news are unclear. Years ago, reporters in television news began favoring more dramatic stories as part of a switch to the *action* news format. In a similar way, it is possible Internet editors and writers may be favoring more stereotype-laden stories that read more dramatic in attempts to generate as many views as possible for their stories. In essence, these structural limitations of the news format may be, in part, driving which representations are being selected as news worthy (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). Stories featuring crime, undocumented immigrants, drugs, welfare, gangs, and athletes (e.g., many of the most stereotypic traits) may generate more views for stories and thus might be deemed more newsworthy than those that are neutral or counter-stereotypic in presentation, especially if they are deemed deviant (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997). However, given the limitations of content analytic methodology, the exact reasons remain unclear and are beyond the scope of this investigation.

### **The Model of Racial Representation Moving Beyond the Race-Crime Paradigm**

One of the stated goals of this dissertation is to expand scholar's understanding of the varied presentations of race within Internet news. Specifically this study moved beyond a focus on race and crime to catalog alternative stereotypic presentations that may be presented by the mass media. This goal emerged from significant gaps in the extant literature that largely focused

on crime news (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Entman, 1994; Josey et al., 2010). Devine and Elliot (1995) argue correctly that to overcome such shortcomings, scholars must not only consider larger stereotypes (e.g., Mammy, Brute, etc.) but investigate smaller presentations by examining specific traits (e.g., poor) or roles (e.g., migrant worker) associated with persons of color.

Findings from the current study indicate that, indeed, alternatives to the race-crime paradigm exist in Internet news. For a full breakdown of all stereotypic traits, see Table 8. In answer to RQ1, Native Americans were exclusively associated with gambling traits. This is keeping with prior research that found Native Americans stereotyped as being associated with gambling and alcohol (Ganje, 2003; Heider, 2000; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2003). As *model minorities*, Asians were largely associated with stereotypes related to *science*. Again this is in keeping with research performed by Wong et al. (2008). It is also understandable, as research notes, that Asians largely escape the calamity of association with socially problematic issues (Josey et al., 2010). In a similarly uniform trait distribution, Arabs were exclusively associated with terrorism. This is keeping with prior research in both television (Dixon & Williams, 2015) and Internet news (Josey et al., 2010). Taken as a whole, these three groups were marginalized to traits in a relatively uniform manner per group. Yet, despite this, each trait found expands our understanding of the myriad of alternatives to the race-crime paradigm. Latinos and African Americans, in contrast, saw a much greater dispersal of stereotype traits and associations.

Prior research has demonstrated that Latinos are often associated with issues of undocumented immigration (Josey et al., 2010) or criminal activity (Dixon & Linz, 2000a). This trend held true in the current analysis. Latinos were most likely to be associated with crime-related traits and undocumented immigration. Similarly, Latinos were associated with gang

activity and drugs. These are both in keeping with prior analyses and lend support to choices made by prior scholars within the extant literature to examine immigration and crime as stereotypes of Latinos. However, Latinos did, indeed, have other traits associated with them. Latinos were linked with professional athletics and migrant work above and beyond those detailed previously. Clearly, there are other stereotypic traits present for Latinos that merit investigation by scholars that may be shaping stereotypic cognitions about them as a racial group.

African Americans' dispersal of stereotype traits was not as wide as that seen for Latinos. Prior research has demonstrated that Blacks are most often associated with issues of ethnic blame (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Josey et al., 2010). However, prior research has also shown that African Americans are stereotyped as being athletic as well (Billings, 2004). Findings from the current study bear these notions out in Internet news. Specifically, Blacks were most often stereotyped in association with crime, accounting for 64% of all stereotype associations. Further, a substantial portion of stereotypic associations involved being highly athletic. This is similar to what has been found by Billings (2004) and others. Lastly, African Americans were associated with other socially stigmatized issues: welfare, poverty, and drugs. Taken together, these findings extend and replicate what was found in prior research. They also underscore the importance of research not getting caught too deeply within a single paradigmatic lens of race and crime. Having discussed the findings from the current study, at length, it is now prudent to see how they inform the new *Model of Racial Representation*.

### **Model of Racial Representation**

Quite possibly the largest contribution of this dissertation to the extant literature is the advancement of a new theoretical tool for understanding the portrayal of persons of color in mass

media. Chapter Two of this manuscript detailed prior content studies of the portrayal of race in news programming. Chapter Three detailed the most prominent theoretical tools relied upon in past investigations for understanding the content and effects of racialized news portrayals on consumers. Within both chapters, the most prominent shortcomings were laid out, explaining the impetus for the *Model of Racial Representation*. Below, the advantages of this model are discussed, with particular attention paid to how the findings reported in the preceding chapter and above provide evidence of its validity and utility.

### **Content Analytic Theory Informed by Effects Research**

As referenced in Chapter Three of this dissertation, one of the biggest shortcomings of prior theories that attempt to explain or categorize the racialized portrayals of persons of color is the fact that they are often devoid of any connection to the effects literature. Prior research and theorizing conducted by Clark (1972) used an emergent approach to developing theory, relying on his data for the portrayal of African Americans in entertainment media to develop classification schemes. Although he was able to correctly classify the portrayal of Blacks into a series of stages at the time, his model failed to dovetail with effects-based research, making it difficult to hypothesize the potential effects of each stage. Add to this the other shortcomings of Clark's (1972) stages (See Chapter Three) and the need for a new theory of representation is clear. The *Model of Racial Representation* remedies these problems by having its two most basic assumptions premised on effects-based theories.

First, the Cultivation Hypothesis (Gerbner, Gross, and Signorelli, 1994), posits that the frequency of a particular portrayal is important because the more one is likely to see a stereotypic representation, the more one is likely to believe that it is truly reflective of qualities of that group. Thus, within the *Model of Representation*, frequency was incorporated as a key premise

in determining in what *state* of representation any group resides (e.g., Neglect, Imbalance, or Symmetry). This allows scholars to examine a group's *state* and hypothesize as to the potential Cultivation effects exposure to it may have on consumers. Although some might criticize the inclusion of Cultivation as a premise for a theory that seeks to examine interactive and selective content, the current analysis (See Chapter Six) found a high degree of overlap (i.e., 60% of Top stories were also Popular) between what is being presented to consumers and what they ultimately consume. Simply put, media gatekeepers still play an important role in the content that individuals consume. Thus, although consumers may have the option to be more active in their selection of media content online, much of what they consume is that which the purveyors of news want them to read.

Second, the *Model of Racial Representation* moves beyond Cultivation to include theory that may be, at times, more applicable to the world of Internet news. As detailed at length in Chapter Three of this dissertation, the Internet news landscape provides individual's choice in what news they ultimately consume, and, indeed, a substantial percentage (i.e., 40%) of information that is consumed by readers is not that which news websites deem the most important. Social Identity and Categorization scholars posit that one must understand the nature of content to understand what individuals may consume and the effects it may have (Billings, 2004; Mastro, 2009). Prior research has demonstrated that the nature of content can affect selection of media content, predicated on an individual's sense of self and group membership (Appiah, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Alter, 2013; Hastall & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2013; Knobloch-Westerwick, Appiah, & Alter, 2008; Mastro, 2009).

As such, the *Model of Racial Representation* included the overall nature of content as a second major tenant to determining representation *states* for persons of color. Operationally,

valence was defined as the balance of stereotypic to counter-stereotypic content within each news story or website. This is an important means to operationalize valence because prior research has demonstrated that groups can perceive or select content in ways guided by Social Identity and group membership (2009). Of relevance to effects-based scholars is that understanding a group's valence *state* allows them to make important predictions about the selection and perception of Internet news. Findings from the current analysis suggest that persons of color are more stereotypically represented in non-traditional news websites than in traditional ones. This, in part, may explain why Melican and Dixon (2008) found that Whites who expressed higher levels of *Modern Racism* also tended to get their news from non-traditional sites. Including valence as a premise for the current model allows scholars to not only understand content differences, but potentially predict which sites and stories users might be likely to consume.

### **A Model Based in Social Science**

As important as it is for any content theory to have a strong connection to effects-based research, it must also be predicated on the rigors of the scientific method. The *Model of Racial Representation* moves beyond prior theories such as Clark's (1972) stages model or Ethnic Blame Discourse (Dixon & Linz, 2000a; Josey et al., 2010; Romer, Jamieson, & De Coteau, 1998). Although these approaches have worked well for prior investigations into racialized portrayals of persons of color within mediated contexts, they lack explicit rules based within the world of empirical research. The current model diverges from prior theories by building itself firmly upon three statistical tools for determining representation *states* for persons of color.

First, the *Model of Racial Representation* incorporates two measures of frequency in delimiting representation *state*: raw frequency of a group among the sample and Z tests of

independent proportions. This is crucial because a group cannot truly be in balance or symmetry, as evidenced in the findings here, if they fail to occupy a significant proportion of the overall sample or their representation is significantly lower than one would expect when compared to indicators of social reality. Second, the *Model of Racial Representation* incorporates the use of a chi-square test to determine whether the valence of portrayals is balanced and normally distributed. Findings from this dissertation provide evidence that persons of color indeed are not presented in a balanced manner. Finally, the current model allows one to investigate the magnitude and direction of *imbalance* present for racial groups by examining the chi-square residuals and computing an *Imbalance Magnitude Index*. All three of these statistical tools take content scholarship further, providing set statistical methodology to guide analysis when determining the overall *state* of representation for any racial group within the news content. Ultimately, this addresses many of the issues with prior theories that attempted to categorize racialized media content.

### **Overcoming Limitations of Prior Models**

There is no purpose of proposing a new theoretical tool for scholarship if it fails to address limitations of prior models or does not inform our understanding of phenomena in meaningful ways. As noted above, the *Model of Racial Representation* attempts to do both by being rooted within the world of effects-based literature as well as providing statistical tools for scholars to determine representation *states*. Yet there are several other limitations of prior models that are overcome as well. Chapter Two of this manuscript detailed many of the limitations of prior theories, including Clark's (1972) stages approach. This section explains how the *Model of Racial Representation* overcomes the four biggest shortcomings of prior theories.



One of the largest criticisms leveled against Clark's (1972) stages theory is that it was overly concerned with entertainment media and, as such, its categorization scheme was inappropriate for other forms of media content (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010). Content scholars need a flexible framework to understand and examine media portrayals of various social groups, one that can be applied to any medium or content type therein. The *Model of Racial Representation* stems not from an emergent analysis of a particular data form and instead is predicated on larger theoretical constructs. As such, it can be successfully applied to a variety of media and content. For example, the current analysis spanned multiple types of websites (i.e., Traditional and Non-Traditional) as well as a variety of media content (e.g., Entertainment, Sports, or Business stories). Thus, its utility extends across many media forms and types.

Another potent criticism of Clark's (1972) stages model is that it is overly rooted within the unique historical circumstances surrounding the portrayal of African Americans in entertainment media (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010). Certainly at the time it was important for scholarship to track the historically most subordinated group and its representations. However, this led to *stages* that applied most accurately to only African Americans. Scholars who attempted to use Clark's (1972) stages model either had to struggle with fitting other racial groups into categories that best applied to unique representations of Blacks or modify each stage heavily, relying on other theoretical tools (Josey et al., 2010). The *Model of Racial Representation* overcomes this by examining the frequency of representation and balance of valence. Thus it can be applied to all racial groups, regardless of the unique stereotypes associated with them. As seen in Chapter Six of this dissertation, all racial groups could be adequately categorized as to representation *state*. Further, it can be applied to other subordinated groups (e.g., LGBT) in future analyses while still being fruitful.

The third major criticism explained in Chapter Three of this manuscript of Clark's (1972) stages approach is that it sees media portrayals as a series of stages that a group must successively go through (Giles, 2003; Josey et al., 2010). Here, each group will pass from *non-recognition*, through *ridicule*, to *regulation*, and ultimately finish in the *respect* stage. A group cannot slip from one stage back to another. For example, if a group achieves the *regulation* stage of representation, Clark (1972) posits that it cannot and will not revert to a stage of *ridicule* at any point in the future (Giles, 2003). This static view of progression towards *respect* is very much rooted in notions of the United States as a melting pot and that once a group is absorbed within the larger respected populace, it will remain there indefinitely. However, this notion lacks face validity, and prior scholarship has proven it untrue (Dixon & Josey, 2013). The *Model of Racial Representation* has no such assumption and sees representation *states* as dynamic, ever changing. Certainly events such as 9/11, Ferguson or the election of President Obama may have some tangible impact on the portrayal of their respective group. As such, the current model allows for not only classifying a group's *state*, but also for examining the magnitude of imbalance present for any group at any given time. This allows scholars to track the ebb and flow of any group's *state* of representation over time.

Lastly, the *Model of Racial Representation* answers the call of scholars such as Devine and Elliot (1995) to move beyond static understanding of stereotypes and to consider alternative presentations of persons of color. It does so in two ways. The first is that it relies not on larger stereotypic constructs for each group that in turn have traits associated with them but rather on the traits themselves. Prior research has demonstrated that this is more appropriate (1995). Findings from the current analysis bear this notion out. For each group, stereotypic traits beyond those examined together in prior analyses have been found for multiple racial groups (e.g., crime,

science and migrant worker). Second, the *Model of Racial Representation* included not only stereotypic content, but also counter-stereotypic and stereotype-neutral presentations. This is crucial because focusing solely on stereotypic portrayals may miss the overall presentation of persons of color. It also ignores potent counter-stereotypes or neutral content that may drive consumers to favor certain websites/stories over others.

### **Contributions of the Model of Racial Representation**

This section detailed the many ways that the *Model of Racial Representation* moves content analytic scholarship forward in being able to explain problematic portrayals of persons of color. It explained the validity and advantages of basing theory firmly within the realm of effects-based research. Additionally, it explained how the current model relies on statistical tools to provide meaningful delineation between representation *states*. Finally, it explained how the *Model of Racial Representation* overcomes limitations present in prior theorizing about the portrayal of persons of color within the mass media. In the next section, limitations of the current study are discussed.

### **Limitations of the Current Project Directions for Future Research**

As with any study of media content, this project is not without its weaknesses. This section seeks to detail the weaknesses of the current study and will ultimately point to areas of future research. First, although this dissertation sampled from over 3,100 total stories for analysis, it did not yield as many characters as expected. Despite the fact that there were enough stories captured, one problem encountered in the current analysis is that not all stories featured characters (e.g., stories detailing the release of the *all new* Ford Mustang). This ended up having a larger impact than anticipated because this resulted in lower than desired frequencies of total characters (N=3955). Further, when limiting characters for analysis, race had to be easily

determinable by research assistants. Thus, not all characters in the sample were coded because race could not always be determined. This resulted in even fewer characters for analysis (N=2542). Future studies should take a more focused approach by relying on a quota sampling strategy to ensure the maximum number of characters are coded, capturing more variance within presentations.

Second, and related to the first point, the current analysis lacked sufficient cell sizes for most stereotype and counter-stereotype traits to make meaningful Inter-reality comparisons. Some frequencies in stereotype trait analysis were fewer than twenty and thus made performing Inter-reality comparisons either impossible or inadvisable. Future analyses should rely on the method mentioned in the section prior to ensure a higher frequency of stereotype traits so comparisons can be made more easily. Prior analyses in the race-crime paradigm (Dixon & Linz, 2000a) were able to achieve sufficiently high numbers by narrowing the scope of their analyses to stories only concerning crime. Although this is one approach that may work, it precludes a varied sample across multiple content areas like the current study. A better approach is to employ a larger sample using replacement techniques to eliminate all stories that do not feature at least one character where race is identifiable. Doing so would yield more complete analyses at a more fine-grained level. This would allow scholars the ability to determine how far out of balance with reality the stereotypic valence is relying on Inter-reality comparisons.

The current analysis included coding schemes that tried to parse out the role that gender plays in the presentation of persons of color. However, due largely to uneven frequencies of stereotypes across both genders and racial groups, such comparisons could not be made. Similar to the observations detailed above, this is largely a function of insufficient sample size when splitting characters along more than two filtering variables. Cell frequencies for such

comparisons in the most frequently occurring group of color (i.e., African Americans) failed to yield sufficient numbers for meaningful distinctions when comparing across gender and specific stereotype traits. This can be remedied in future analyses by employing the previously mentioned sampling strategy which limits story inclusion to those where a character is featured and race can be easily identified.

Next, the current study, despite finding significant differences among the presentation of persons of color across and within websites, cannot speak to the reasons behind such differences. This is largely a methodological constraint and should be explored in follow-up studies relying on survey and interview techniques. Here, a scholar, in a manner similar to that employed by Hieder (2000), would interview and survey editors, newsmakers, and reporters themselves regarding how news is selected for inclusion among top news. Further surveys regarding story selection for websites in general should be conducted. Doing so would go a long way in determining the reasons explaining the findings detailed above. Are news editors simply seeking more sensationalized stories involving crime, drugs, and welfare? Is this the reason they are included as top news? Further, surveys designed to investigate potential demographic targeting across websites might prove useful. Conducting them might provide answers to the questions posed by the findings in Chapter Six. Specifically, it may elucidate the functional reasons behind more stereotypic news coverage among Non-Traditional news websites. Unfortunately, the current study, owing to its design, is ill-equipped to answer such questions.

Fourth, though this dissertation examined a number of racial groups and found a significant level of imbalance and neglect for minority groups, one specialized type of *imbalance*, failed to emerge, which bears consideration here. It is possible that a negative IMI score and state of *imbalance* could result from a bimodal distribution of data. Here, a group

would see more stereotypes and counter-stereotypes than expected in roughly equal numbers. Further, they would have far less neutral portrayals than expected. In order for this to happen, neutral presentations would necessarily occupy only 25% of their expected frequency and the ratio among the three would be  $2_s-1_n-2_{cs}$ . Although this was not observed for any group within the current data set, one could hypothesize a scenario where that may be the case.

Predicting effects from such a case is interesting. One could argue that the balance of stereotypes to counter-stereotypes could promote cognitions within the viewer that leads to the alteration or breakdown of stereotypic cognitive structures about a racial group. Under these circumstances, the counter-stereotypes, because they are balanced with stereotypes, would either gradually move such cognitions (e.g., book keeping) or drench a user with enough counter-stereotypic information resulting in the abandonment of the stereotype altogether (e.g., conversion). The goodness of fit principle (Higgins, 1996; Rothbart & John, 1985) explains that neither of these is likely to occur with a bimodal data set. Instead, *subtyping* is the most likely outcome.

Simply put, for the overall stereotype to change, representations must be seen as truly representative of a group to affect change (Rothbart & John, 1985). Presentations with high counter-stereotypic occurrences would have little salience with the existing cognitive structure. Thus, they would not be processed as truly part of the group as a whole (Higgins, 1996). Here, the counter-stereotypes are seen as a special case representation of a minority (e.g., The Obamas/Bill Cosby/Oprah) and are not processed as part of the group whole. Rather a unique subset of the group is created which shares the characteristics presented in the counter-stereotypic stories, but not integrated within the cognitive structures regarding the typical

minority group member. Thus bimodal distributions are unlikely to affect stereotype change, instead promoting subtyping or creation of an exemplar for a *good* person of color.

Finally, even though this dissertation explains the *state* of racial representation for persons of color in Internet news, it cannot speak to the potential effects of such content. One of the more intriguing findings of this dissertation concerns content differences across website type (e.g., Traditional vs Non-Traditional). Prior research has demonstrated that individuals who express more *Modern Racism* consume more news from Non-Traditional news outlets than from Traditional ones (Melican & Dixon, 2008). Further, individuals who express lower levels are more likely to visit Traditional news sites for information than visit Non-Traditional ones. This dissertation found that this could be owing to content differences across these sites. Specifically, Non-Traditional news sites were greater purveyors of stereotypic content than were Traditional news outlets. However, one cannot safely say that these content differences lead to greater or less expressed prejudice. It is entirely possible that this consumption is merely a reflection of selectivity in news consumption, as posited by Social Identity theory (Mastro, 2009). Further observational studies similar to that conducted by Knobloch & Meng (2009) must be conducted to see whether individuals who hold more prejudice select stereotypic content or if stereotypic content informs expressed prejudice.

### **Recommendations for Users and Journalists**

An interesting point emerges from the findings of this study. What can users and journalists do to alter, avoid, or counter such representations within news outlets. Heider (2000) found that much of the focus in traditional news on socially problematic issues surrounding minorities stemmed from what he deemed *structural limitations* or *incognizant racism*. Structural limitations include a lack of reporters, actual location of a news outlet or general

pressures to adhere to an *action* news script which favors crime or other socially problematic behaviors in ways that are easy to digest and follow stereotypic tropes (e.g., White victim/minority perpetrator). In his analysis, most journalists felt as if they were doing a fair job covering minority groups, in spite of the fact that their stories revolved around highly stereotypic events (e.g., cultural festivals). Here, the mere inclusion of a group in coverage is seen as adequate. The current data suggests that the status quo portrays persons of color in highly problematic manners. On a broad level, journalists should consider the economics of not actively engaging in reductive coverage of persons of color. Minority focused websites such as *The Root* provide evidence that organizations can cover minorities fairly, while still amassing readership. Further, within stories, if a stereotypic issue must be mentioned, reporters should seek out alternative sources to balance the portrayals. For example, if a story covers a Black criminal, reporters could seek out an African American police officer from which to obtain details on the crime. Doing so creates balance within a story and promotes more *symmetry* in the overall representation landscape.

Users can additionally play a role in altering or countering stereotypic coverage. Using their own cognitive resources, users can opt out of selecting stories that have salacious headlines and possibly prevent them from trending within a news website. Further, they can comment on a story, pointing out the inaccuracies or highly stereotypic portrayals therein. However, the greatest asset at the disposal of users is their power to share counter-stereotypic content with other web news consumers. Users should use comment sections and social media to highlight Internet news stories that include alternative and positive presentations of persons of color. Doing so could provide other users with alternatives to the largely stereotypic content presented by web news.



## Conclusion

This dissertation began with several goals in mind. First, it set out to extend foundational work in the area of race and news performed by scholars in prior decades (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b; Entman, 1994, 1992; Romer, Jamieson, & DeCoteau, 1998). It sought to replicate prior content studies while probing for potential differences that may emerge in the modern era of news coverage. As part of this goal, the effect of the election of America's first Black president was also examined. Findings indicated that as much as technology and politics may have advanced, the overall portrayal of persons of color has not.

The second goal of this dissertation was to develop a comprehensive theory of racialized mediated content. The *Model of Racial Representation* was laid out in full and tested using the current data. It represents an improvement over prior theories advanced by Clark (1972) and Romer et al., (1998) for explaining how persons of color are presented in news and other media forms. It allows scholars to move beyond the race-crime paradigm and characterize the *state* of representation of any marginalized group. Further, it overcomes the limitations of Clark's (1972) stages theory by deriving its basic premises from effects-based theories and laying out clear statistical tests for proper *state* characterizations.

The final goal of this dissertation was to extend work done by Josey et al. (2010) in their initial analyses of Internet news. The current study expanded the often-dichotomous analyses performed by prior scholars along the lines of ethnic blame (e.g., Blacks/Crime, Latinos/Immigration, and Arabs/Terrorism). It found a number of different stereotypic trait associations for groups of color. It also points future research to fruitful areas of investigation to bolster the extant literature. Future research should take up the direction of this study by expanding their sample sizes and branching into experimental/survey work which could further

our understanding of the interplay of selectivity, Cultivation, and attitudes towards persons of color.

It has been argued by some that the US exists in a *post-racial* era (Lum, 2009). Pundits often point to the election of President Obama as evidence of this new era. At least with respect to Internet news coverage, the current study seems to rebut such claims. During the writing of this manuscript, its author was saddened by the sheer frequency of tragedies that continued to populate his newsfeed involving persons of color and the highly problematic coverage each received across news websites. It is obvious to this author that investigations and analyses are as relevant today as they ever have been.

## Tables

Table 1

*Traditional and Non-Traditional News Websites Analyzed in Sample*

Traditional News Website	Non-Traditional News Websites
CNN News	Yahoo News
New York Times	Google News
Fox News	Huffington Post
Washington Post	The Drudge Report
Los Angeles Times	The Daily Beast
New York Post	MSNBC News*
CBS News	AOL News
ABC News	Alternet News
USA Today	Helium News
Reuters	Politico

*Note.* Traditional Internet news websites are categorized this way because they have some offline presence. Non-Traditional news websites have no offline counterpart.

\*MSNBC was treated as a Non-Traditional news website because of NBC's partnership with Microsoft and the concurrent launch of the website/satellite channel which both focused on interactivity and selectivity.

Table 2

*Reliability Calculations for Key Variables Utilizing Krippendorff's Alpha*

Variable Description	Alpha Level Observed
What Website Contained Story	.99
What Section of the Site Contained Story	.90
Was the Story Featured on the Homepage	.82
Was the Story Among the Top Stories	.88
Was the Story Among the Most Popular	.95
Overall Tone of the Story	.83
Overall Tone of the Headline	.81
Image Prominence	.98
Character Prominence	.89
Was the Character President Obama	.98
Was the Character Michelle Obama	.97
Age of the Character	.80
Gender of Character	.90
Socioeconomic Status of Character	.91
Character was White	.85
Character was Black	.88
Character was Latino	.81
Character was Asian	.90
Character was Native American	.83
Character was Multi-Racial	.85

Table 2 (continued)

Stereotype at Story Level	.87
Stereotype associated with Character	.86
Counter-Stereotype at Story Level	.89
Counter-Stereotype associated with Character	.92

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Table 3

*United States Census Categories for Race Census Year 2009*

Racial Characteristic	Number of Individuals	(Population Proportion)
White	199,851,000	(65.1%)
Black or African American	39,641,000	(12.9%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,151,000	(1%)
Asian	14,014,000	(4.6%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	578,000	(0.1%)
Arab*	3,685,000	(1.2%)
Hispanic (One Race)	48,419,000	(15.8%)

*Note.* Data, unless otherwise denoted was drawn from Table 6 of the U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical abstract of the United States: 2009.

\*The US Census does not formally recognize persons of Arab descent as a separate racial group. These numbers came from another report from the Arab American Institute.

Table 4

*Comparison of Sample to United States Census Data*

Race of Character	Sample Frequency (Proportion)	US Census Frequency (Proportion)	Difference in Proportions	95% Confidence Interval	Z-score
Blacks With					
Obamas	404 (15.9%)	39,641,000 (12.9%)	+2.98%*	±1.42	4.46
Blacks Without					
Obamas	301 (12.4%)	39,641,000 (12.9%)	-0.49%	±1.31	-0.73
Latinos	161 (6.6%)	48,419,000 (15.8%)	-9.13%*	±0.99	-12.31
Whites	1775 (69.7%)	199,851,000 (65.1%)	+7.69%*	±1.77	7.91
Asians	77 (3.18%)	14,014,000 (4.6%)	-1.39%*	±0.7	-3.27
Arabs	107 (4.4%)	3,685,000 (1.2%)	+3.21%*	±0.82	14.32
Native					
Americans	14 (0.6%)	3,151,000 (1%)	-0.45%**	±0.31	-1.99

\* Significant at  $p < .01$ , 2-tailed

\*\* Significant at  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed

Table 5

*Valence of Portrayals in Internet News with Imbalance Magnitude Index Scores*

Race	Characters	Stereotypes (Residual Difference)	Neutral (Residual Difference)	Counter Stereotypes (Residual Difference)	$\chi^2$	Imbalance Magnitude Index Score
Blacks with						
Obamas	404	105 (+40.4)	215 (-59.7)	84 (+19.4)	43.9*	-19.98
Blacks without						
Obamas	301	150 (+52.8)	101 (-54.7)	50 (+1.8)	76.7*	-35.12
Latinos	161	41 (+15.2)	86 (-23.5)	34 (+8.2)	16.69*	-18.94
Whites	1775	206 (-76.4)	1368 (+167.8)	191 (-91.4)	73.71*	8.66
Asians	77	12 (-0.3)	46 (-6.4)	19 (+6.7)	4.4	0.78
Arabs	107	31 (+13.9)	56 (-16.8)	20 (+2.9)	14.6*	-25.98
Native						
Americans	14	3 (+0.8)	10 (+0.5)	1 (-1.2)	0.97	-10.71

*Note.* Above is listed the frequency of characters by race and valence state occurrence. Residual differences are deviations from the expected frequency of each valence state.

\* Significant at  $p < .001$



Table 6

*Racial Stereotypes Across Website Type (Traditional versus Non-Traditional)*

	Observed Stereotypes (Proportion)	Expected Stereotypes (Proportion)	Residual (Proportional) Difference
Traditional Websites	158 (49.2%)	192.6 (60%)	-34.6 (-10.8%)
Non-Traditional	163 (50.8%)	128.3 (40%)	+34.6 (+10.8%)

$\chi^2 (2, N= 321) = 15.54, p = .001$

*Note.* Calculations for expected frequencies were based upon the fact that traditional news websites accounted for 60% of all minority representation. It was expected then that traditional news websites should contain 60% and Non-Traditional 40% of all racial stereotypes if both website types were representing minorities in a similar manner.

Table 7

*Differences Between Expected and Observed Stereotypes in Top and Popular Internet News*

	Observed (Proportion)	Expected (Proportion)	Residual Difference (Proportion)
Top News	124 (44%)	112.8 (40%)	+11.2 (+4%)*
Not Top News	153 (54.3%)	169.2 (60%)	-16.2 (-5.7%)*
Popular News	67 (24%)	45.1 (16%)	+21.9 (+8%)**
Not Popular News	203 (71.8%)	208.7 (74%)	-5.7 (-2.2%)**

\*  $\chi^2$  (2, N= 282) =879.31,  $p = .001$

\*\*  $\chi^2$  (2, N= 282) =20.1,  $p = .001$

Table 8

*Distribution of Stereotype Traits Across Racial Groups*

	Whites	Blacks	Latinos	Asians	Arabs	Native Americans
Crime	-	64 (64%)	31 (75%)	-	-	-
Welfare	-	3 (3%)	1 (2%)	-	-	-
Immigration	-	-	21 (51%)	-	-	-
Migrant Work	-	-	8 (13%)	1 (8%)	-	-
Terrorism	-	-	-	-	31 (100%)	-
Science	-	-	-	10 (83%)	-	-
Athlete	-	20 (20%)	6 (14%)	1 (8%)	-	-
Gambling	-	-	-	-	-	3 (100%)
Drugs	-	14 (14%)	16 (39%)	-	-	-
Poverty	-	14 (14%)	-	-	-	-
Gangs	-	-	16 (39%)	-	-	-
Intolerant	35 (17%)	-	-	-	-	-
Wealth	130 (63%)	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate	120 (58%)	-	-	-	-	-
Corrupt	50 (24%)	-	-	-	-	-

*Note.* Stereotype traits were non-mutually exclusive, meaning they could overlap (e.g., drug use coded as *drugs* overlaps with crime in many instances).

Table 9

*Examples of Stereotypes, Counter-Stereotypes and Stereotypic Neutral Content*

	Stereotype	Counter-Stereotype	Stereotype Neutral
African Americans	(Peterson). . .is a rare specimen of almost freakish genetics. . .	(Michelle Obama) . . .making her one of the most popular and prominent figures in Washington. . .a valuable asset. . .	(Johnson). . .a resident of Oakpark, says he loves retreating to his “mancave”. . .
Latinos	. . .represent the largest portion of “illegal aliens”. . .	. . .as a congressman, Gutierrez prepares for a rally at a church. . .	Fernandez, a high school junior, reflects on his time. . .
Arabs	(Yusuf) conspired to aid al-Shabab, an al-Qaida linked militia. . .	. . .peaceful law abiding non-Muslim Arabs are best positioned. . .	. . .is part of a growing voting bloc of Arabs within the US. . .
Asians	(Singh). . .lead researcher. . .	Ming aided the Rockets in their victory. . .	. . .founder of Kholsa ventures. . .
Native Americans	Oodham tribe member discusses plans to build a casino and resort. . .	. . .tribe member and attorney. . .	. . .supports the smoking ban. . .
Whites	Phelps, a Westboro parishioner, defends the funeral protest. . .	. . .suspected of supporting al-Qaida. . .	Albert Snyder discusses the protest. . .

*Note.* All traits listed above were gathered from stories coded by research assistants during reliability training.

Table 10

*States of Representation within the Model of Racial Representation*

State of Representation	Characteristics of Representation State
Neglect	Groups must be at a rate of near invisibility Portrayals must occupy less than 3% of sample Must be significantly less than expected when compared to indicators of social reality
Imbalance	Can be fairly, under, or over-represented within the sample in comparison to indicators of social reality Must have IMI scores outside the range of +/-16
Symmetry	Must be fairly represented in comparison to indicators of social reality IMI score must fall within the range of -16 to +16

*Note.* Indicators of social reality include but are not limited to data obtained for the US population by the Census Bureau.

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## Appendix A: Primary Data Analysis Codebook

### Codebook Measures for Content Analysis of Online News

#### **Story Identification:**

**1. *coderid: What is your coder ID?***

**2. *homepagedate: What is the date listed on the homepage?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Look for the date near the top of the file/homepage. This IS NOT the date listed in a file extension.

**3. *headline: Please write out the headline associated with the story you are coding.***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Write out the headline associated with the story you are coding. It can be found at the top of each web page near the top of your browser window.

**4. *storysummary: In three sentences or less, describe the story you are coding.***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Give a brief description of the story in 3 sentences or less.

**5. *capturedate: What date was the story captured?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Please indicate the date that your story was captured (not the date displayed on the page itself, but rather that indicated by the file/folder in which it is located: Given the nature of the WWW, stories are often posted at different times we are interested in the general time according to slot regardless of Time Zone)

**6. *capturetime: What time was the story captured?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Please indicate the time slot that your story was captured. This can be found by locating the file within its folder rather than looking on the webpage itself).

**7. *whichwebsite: Which website was the story published?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

1. CNN News Online
2. New York Times Online
3. Fox News Online
4. Reuters
5. Washington Post Online
6. Los Angeles Times Online
7. USA Today Online
8. ABC News Online
9. New York Post Online
10. CBS News Online
11. Yahoo News
12. Google News
13. Huffington Post
14. The Drudge Report
15. The Daily Beast
16. MSNBC News
17. AOL News
18. AlterNet News
19. Helium News
20. Politico

Look for the website that the content/story was published on rather than which organization produced the story given that some sites are content gathering sources and not originators (ex. Some stories are published by Yahoo but are written by the AP or Reuters).

**8. *paragraphcount: How many paragraphs long is the story?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Please count the number of paragraphs present in the story.

Remember most paragraphs will be separated by both spacing and an indent but some will not and will only be separated by spacing (do not include headline, by line or signature).

**9. *storycategory: What category was the story under?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

1. Sports
2. Business
3. Opinion
4. Life style
5. Real Estate
6. Technology/Science
7. Health
8. US
9. Local
10. International
11. Special interest
12. Politics
13. Entertainment
14. Other

Each story will initially be placed under a category by each website (ex. Headlines, breaking news, science) sometimes there will be category statements on each page, when there is not, you will have to locate the initial news homepage to determine story category. When the story is featured in more than one category, use the most prominent (ex. The one that appears first on the initial homepage).

**10. *topnews: Was the story featured in Breaking News/Top Stories?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. Was Not featured
1. Was Featured
99. Unknown/Not Applicable

Most websites will on their news homepage, have a separate section for Breaking/Top News Stories near the top of the page. If a story is located their answer 1, if not use 0, if you cannot determine, use 99)

**11. *popstory: Was the story featured in the most emailed/popular stories?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. Was Not featured
1. Was Featured
99. Unknown/Not Applicable

Some websites feature a most emailed or most popular section of their site that feature stories and rank them by popularity. It is located on the main page and usually separated in its own section

**12. *startonhomepage: Does the story start on the sites homepage?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Does not start on homepage
- 1. Starts on homepage
- 99. Unable to determine/Not applicable

Some Websites will (much like a newspaper) begin a story's text under a headline on the main page, if any part of the body text of a story is present on the main page other than the headline, code as 1.

**13. *fullstory: Was the entire story present on the linked page?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes
- 99. Unknown/Not Applicable

### Homepage Level of Analysis

14. *freqblackmale: How many African American Males were featured in the homepage images?*
15. *freqblackfemale: How many African American Females were featured in the homepage images?*
16. *freqwhitemale: How many White Males were featured in the homepage images?*
17. *freqwhitefemale: How many White Females were featured in the homepage images?*
18. *freqlatinomale: How many Latino Males were featured in the homepage images?*
19. *freqlatinofemale: How many Latino Females were featured in the homepage images?*
20. *freqarabmale: How many Arab Males were featured in the homepage images?*
21. *freqarabfemale: How many Arab Females were featured in the homepage images?*
22. *freqasianmale: How many Asian Males were featured in the homepage images?*
23. *freqasianfemale: How many Asian Females were featured in the Homepage images?*
24. *freqnativemale: How many Native American Males were featured in the homepage images?*
25. *freqnativefemale: How many Native American Females were featured in the homepage images?*
26. *freqblackmaleheadline: How many Black Males were featured in homepage headlines?*
27. *freqblackfemaleheadline: How many Black Females were featured in homepage headlines?*
28. *freqwhitemaleheadline: How many White Males were featured in homepage headlines?*
29. *freqwhitefemaleheadline: How many White Females were featured in homepage headlines?*
30. *freqlatinomaleheadline: How many Latino Males were featured in homepage headlines?*



**31. *freqlatinofemaleheadline: How many Latino Females were featured in homepage headlines?***

**32. *freqarabmaleheadline: How many Arab Males were featured in homepage headlines?***

**33. *freqarabfemaleheadline: How many Arab Females were featured in homepage headlines?***

**34. *freqasianmaleheadline: How many Asian Males were featured in homepage headlines?***

**35. *freqasianfemaleheadline: How many Asian Females were featured in homepage headlines?***

**36. *freqnativemaleheadline: How many Native American Males were featured in homepage headlines?***

**37. *freqnativefemaleheadline: How many Native American Females were featured in homepage headlines?***

**38. *homepagestereotypeblack: Were stereotypic theme(s) present for African Americans?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Stereotypes Present

**39. *describestereotypeblack: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

**40. *homepagestereotypewhite: Were stereotypic theme(s) present for Whites?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Stereotypes Present

**41. *describestereotypewhite: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

**42. *homepagestereotypelatino: Were stereotypic theme(s) present for Latinos?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Stereotypes Present

**43. *describestereotypelatinos: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

**44. *homepagestereotypearab: Were stereotypic theme(s) present for Arabs?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Stereotypes Present

**45. *describestereotypearab: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

**46. *homepagestereotypeasian: Were stereotypic theme(s) present for Asians?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Stereotypes Present

**47. *describestereotypeasian: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

**48. homepagestereotypenative: Were stereotypic theme(s) present for Native Americans?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Stereotypes Present

**49. describestereotypenative: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

**50. homepagecounterblack: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present for African Americans?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Counter stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Counter stereotypes Present

**51. describecounterblack: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each counter stereotypic theme that you identified.

**52. homepagecounterwhite: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present for Whites?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Counter stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Counter stereotypes Present

**53. describecounterwhite: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each counter stereotypic theme that you identified.

**54. homepagecounterlatino: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present for Latinos?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Counter stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Counter stereotypes Present

**55. describecounterlatinos: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each counter stereotypic theme that you identified.

**56. homepagecounterarab: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present for Arabs?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Counter stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Counter stereotypes Present

**57. describecounterarab: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each counter stereotypic theme that you identified.

**58. homepagecounterasian: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present for Asians?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Counter stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Counter stereotypes Present

**59. describecounterasian: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each counter stereotypic theme that you identified.

**60. homepagecounternative: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present for Native Americans?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Counter stereotypes Not Present
- 1. Counter stereotypes Present

**61. describecounternative: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each counter stereotypic theme that you identified.

## **Image Level:**

**\*\*\* Repeat Image Level questions for up to three images in this story. \*\*\***

**62. *imagecount: How many images are associated with this story?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No images
- 1. 1 image
- 2. 2 images
- 3. 3 images or more

Some stories will contain multiple images that are not banners or advertising or link buttons. Count the number of images on the page that are CLEARLY meant to supplement the descriptive power of the story. In this case, each image should be coded separately, meaning that each image variable would be coded individually for each image. We are only concerned with the most prominent 3 images associated with each story. The rule for establishing prominence is placement nearest to top of linked page, followed by size. If prominence is not clear, simply pick the best one to be first (If a multiple picture story were to come up during reliability testing, the story should be noted so we can determine if each coder selected the proper/same story order.).

**63. *imagepersonorgroup: Does the image contain a single person or a group?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 1. One person
- 2. Two or more people
- 99. No people in image/unable to determine

## **RACE - Image**

**64. *imageblack: Is the pictured character/group Black?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**65. *imagelatino: Is the pictured character/group Latino?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**66. *imagewhite: Is the pictured character/group White?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**67. *imageasian: Is the pictured character/group Asian?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**68. *imagearab: Is the pictured character/group Arab/Mid Eastern?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**69. *imagenative: Is the pictured character/group Native American?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**70. *imagemultiple: If the picture contains more than one person, is the pictured character/group of multiple races (no clear majority)?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**71. *imgmxd: Is the pictured character/group a Mixed Race person?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**72. *imagelistraces: Please List the two most prominent races judged to comprise the mixed race of the person. (Code as 99 if Not Applicable).***

**73. *imagenorace: Is the pictured character/group's race unable to be determined (no race present)?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**74. *imageskintone: Did you determine race from skin tone pictured?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**75. *imagephenotypical: Did you determine race from Reporter Description of phenotypical race in the Caption?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**76. *imagefamily*: Did you determine race from Family Association?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**77. *imageprior*: Did you determine race from Prior Knowledge (e.g., Tiger Woods/O.J.)?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**78. *imagefirst*: Did you determine race from First Name?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**79. *imagesurname*: Did you determine race from Surname in Caption?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**80. *imageorganization*: Did you determine race from Organization Membership in Caption?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

#### **GENDER - Image**

**81. *imagefemale*: Was a female pictured?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**82. *imagemale*: Was a male pictured?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

#### **AGE - Image**

**83. *imagechild*: Was there a child portrayed?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**84. *image teen: Was there a teen portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**85. *image adult: Was there an Adult Portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**86. *image senior: Was there a Senior Portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**87. *image bodytype: What was the body type shown in the image?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 1. Anorexic
- 2. Thin but healthy
- 3. Average
- 4. Overweight but healthy
- 5. Obese
- 99. Not mentioned/Does not apply

**88. *image athlete: Was the body type portrayed athletic?***

- 0. Not Athletic
- 1. Athletic
- 99. Not Applicable

**89. *Image restrained: Was the character restrained in the image?***

- 0. Character was not restrained
- 1. Character was restrained
- 99. Does not Apply/No Image

**90. *image obama: Is president Obama featured in this image?***

- 0. Not featured in the image
- 1. Obama featured in the image

**91. *image michelle: Is Michelle Obama featured in this image?***

- 0. Not featured in the image
- 1. Michelle featured in the image



## **Headline Level:**

**92. *headlinetone: What was the tone of the headline?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

1. Very Positive
2. Somewhat Positive
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Negative
5. Very Negative

## **RACE – Headline**

**93. *headlineblack: Is a Black character/group mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**94. *headlinelatino: Is a Latino character/group mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**95. *headlinewhite: Is a White character/group mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**96. *headlineasian: Is an Asian character/group mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**97. *headlinearab: Is an Arab/Mid Eastern character/group mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**98. *headlinenative: Is a Native American character/group mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**99. *headlinemultiple: Is a group of Multiple Races (no clear majority) mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

0. No
1. Yes

**100.        *headlinemixed: Is a Mixed Race character mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**101. *headlinelistraces: Please List the two most prominent races judged to comprise the mixed race of the person. (code as 99 if Not Applicable).***

**102.        *headlinenorace: Is the mentioned character/group's race unable to be determined (no race present)?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**103.        *headlinephenotypical: Did you determine race from Reporter Description of phenotypical race?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**104.        *headlinefamily: Did you determine race from Family Association?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**105.        *headlineprior: Did you determine race from Known Race (e.g., Tiger Woods/O.J.)?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**106.        *headlinefirstname: Did you determine race from First Name?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**107.        *headlinesurname: Did you determine race from Surname?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**108. headlineorganization: Did you determine race from Organization Membership?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**GENDER – Headline**

**109. headlinefemale: Was female gender mentioned?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**110. headlinemale: Was male gender mentioned?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**AGE – Headline**

**111. headlinechild: Was there a child portrayed?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**112. headlineteen: Was there a teen portrayed?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**113. headlineadult: Was there an Adult Portrayed?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**114. headlinesenior: Was there a Senior Portrayed?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**115. headlineobama: Was president Obama mentioned in the headline?**

- 0. Not mentioned in the headline
- 1. Obama mentioned in the headline

- 116.**      ***headlinemichelle: Was Michelle Obama mentioned in the headline?***
- 0.      Not mentioned in the headline
  - 1.      Michelle mentioned in the headline

## **General Story Content:**

**117. *storyimage: Does the story have an image(s) associated with it?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0. Does not have an image
- 1. Has an image
- 99. Unable to determine/Not Applicable

Some Stories will have images linked with them (We are only interested in images on the linked pages as we cannot identify which images correspond clearly with stories on the main page) code a story as having an image associated with it if the linked page contains an image (usually a photo) that is CLEARLY associated with the story. Do not code a story as having an image if there is no image or only flash advertising and banners are present on the linked story page.

**118. *storytone: What was the tone of the story overall?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 1. Very Positive
- 2. Somewhat Positive
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Somewhat Negative
- 5. Very Negative

**Determining Tone of the Story & Headline Overall:**

*Tone from adjectives* – In order to determine tone, it is often necessary to examine the adjective and adverb use employed by the article's author. The following is an incomplete listing for a basic typology for tone. When assessing the tone of an article use a sense of overall balance of types of adjectives and adverbs used to describe primary character or group.

**Tone Typology for Adverbs and Adjectives:**  
Typically value laden words used in description of primary group or character.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Saved	Played	Unceremoniously
Won	Stayed the Course	Failed
Rose Above	Bought	Lost
Winning	Medium	Fell on his Face
Cleared the Hurdle	Normal	Loss of Profits
Accomplish	As expected	Decline
Success	Cyclical	Succumb
Power	Stale Mate	Depressed
Prevailed	Tie	Down
Advanced	Independent	Angry
Triumphed	Work	Fell
Victory	Potential	Convicted
Profits	Continue	Alleged
Maximize	Tracks	Abused
Overcome	Probes	Unfairly
Acquitted	Draws	Arrogant
Pretty	Sees	Unintelligent
Attractive	Risks	Ugly
Sexy	Tries	Unkempt

**119.        *storystereotype: Were stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Stereotypes Not Present
- 1.        Stereotypes Present

**120.        *describestereotype: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

Determining if Traditional Stereotypes are Present:

***Stereotypes are not hard to spot when they are presented in an explicit fashion, the implicit ones are a bit more difficult to determine. Use these rules when answering the following question.***

*Stereotypes – These will be pretty obvious to most of us, but a little clarifying will help. For a stereotype to be present here we will see a mention or framing in the news article of traditional themes of a religious, gendered, or race based group.*

Explicit Reference	Implicit Reference
Mentions or Frames news story in such a fashion as to show group or individual in stereotyped manner	Less Explicit than traditional frames or mentioning of stereotypes usually implied
Native American tribe holds event this weekend to commemorate heritage	Vick may be athletic, but not as good at making the judgments as other quarterbacks in the league
KKK seeks to adopt a highway; fights black opposition saying it is they have no right to oppose their application	Sorenstam seeks to make the cut at the US Open
Asian students, in a recent study found to be the largest ethnic group in higher education	Seminole elders see rate of liver cancer nearly double over past twenty years
Percentage of Blacks increase in prison system	Once again, Tyson suspected of hitting a woman at his home in Las Vegas
Mexican seek more support for immigration bill	Local residents seek extension of bilingual education program in southern California
Saudi man suspected of terror plot on NY subway system	Saudi women seek peace in the home

**121.        *storycounterstereotype: Were counter-stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Stereotypes Not Present
- 1.        Stereotypes Present

**122.        *describecounterstereotype: Describe the counter-stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.

Determining if Counter Stereotypes are Present:

***Counter Stereotypes are portrayals that present racial minority groups in ways that greatly diverge from traditional racial stereotypes. These are not to be confused with stories that do not contain racial stereotypes as they rely on tropes that are opposed to traditional notions of racial stereotypes. Please use the examples below as a means to guide you in your decision making process.***

<b>Race</b>	<b>Counter Stereotype Example</b>
<b>African American</b>	<b>“Man elected first Black CFO for Apple Computers”</b> <b>“Darius Rucker Tops Country Charts with new album”</b>
<b>Whites</b>	<b>“Eminem hits gold with new album”</b>
<b>Latinos</b>	<b>“California student Sheila Gomez wins Scripps National bee.”</b>
<b>Arabs</b>	<b>“Aziz Alweel leads peace march on Washington urging for stricter penalties on domestic terror”</b>
<b>Asians</b>	<b>“Bao Huynh to start for Alabama at QB”</b>
<b>Native Americans</b>	<b>“Andra Rush is Founder, President &amp; CEO of Rush Trucking, Inc., in Wayne, MI. which is the largest Native American-owned business in the United States</b>



### **Political Variables Story Level**

**123.        *storyrepublican: Was the Republican party mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Was not mentioned
- 1.        Was mentioned

**124.        *storydemocrat: Was the Democrat party mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Was not mentioned
- 1.        Was mentioned

**125.        *storygreen: Was the Green party mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Was not mentioned
- 1.        Was mentioned

**126.        *storylibertarian: Was the Libertarian party mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Was not mentioned
- 1.        Was mentioned

Most often, this category contains only explicit references to political party. Exceptions to this rule include references to partisan groups or think tanks that align with one particular party without explicitly mentioning the name of the party in the name of the group. For example, the Cato Institute is a think tank dedicated to issues relating to conservative/Libertarian political values. Although not explicit in name, a reference to Cato Institute should be coded as a mention of the Libertarian party because of the direct association.

Non-partisan refers to references to groups or individuals who explicitly describe themselves as “nonpartisan,” and to those groups who have blatant political affiliations but do not openly align with a particular organized ideology.

#### EXAMPLES:

*What counts as a mention of political party?*

Explicit mention of both the Republican and the Democratic parties-  
“Various media outlets quote Republicans more often than Democrats.”

Explicit mention of a Libertarian party-  
“The conservative/libertarian Cato Institute, whose drop in citations since 2002 coincided with its opposition to the invasion of Iraq, saw the biggest percentage gain among the leading think tanks.”

Implicit mention of Libertarian party-  
“The Cato Institute released a report today...”

*What does **NOT** count as a mention of political party (No party mentioned)?*  
**Mere mention of a known candidate that is associated with a party (e.g., George Bush) is not to be coded as a party mention unless there is explicit reference to his party (e.g., Republican George Bush).**

No mention of political party-  
“The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously Tuesday to extend the mandate of the 160,000-member multinational force in Iraq.”  
“The Economic Policy Institute was the top-cited progressive think tank.”

#### **127. *storyconservative: Was a Conservative Ideology mentioned?***

##### RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Was not Mentioned
- 1. Was Mentioned

#### **128. *storyliberal: Was a Liberal Ideology mentioned?***

##### RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Was not Mentioned
- 1. Was Mentioned

**129. *storyprogressive: Was a Progressive Ideology mentioned?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Was not Mentioned
- 1. Was Mentioned

Most often, this category contains only explicit references to political ideologies. Exceptions to this rule include references to partisan groups or think tanks that align with one particular ideology without explicitly mentioning the name of the ideology in the name of the group. For example, the Heritage Foundation is a think tank dedicated to issues relating to conservative political values. Although not explicit in name, a reference to the Heritage Foundation should be coded as a mention of the conservative ideology because of the direct association.

EXAMPLES:

Explicit mention of a progressive ideology-

“The Economic Policy Institute was the top-cited progressive think tank.”

Implicit mention of conservative ideology-

“The Heritage Foundation released a report today...”

No mention of political ideology-

“The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously Tuesday to extend the mandate of the 160,000-member multinational force in Iraq.”

## **Character/Group Level:**

Often in the body of a story, there are multiple character/groups. Each character/group should be coded individually in order of highest to lowest prominence in the story. Prominence is operationalized as the number of times a character/group is referred to, named, quoted, or referenced in any other form. The character/group who is referenced the most is the 'most prominent' and should be coded first, followed by the second most prominent character/group and so on. Groups will be coded as a character/group and noted as such in variable 58.

**At the character/group level we are coding up to four characters or groups, however, each group must obtain a frequency of at least four mentions including explicit personal pronouns to be coded at all.**

### **Example Paragraph and Prominence Ratings for each Character/group**

Attorneys for a man accused of burying alive a 9-year-old girl after kidnapping and raping her have asked a judge to delay the murder trial while they interview new prosecutors' witnesses.

John Couey's attorneys say the Feb. 12 trial date should be pushed back so they can question the seven witnesses added to prosecutors' list earlier this month, including a jailer who says the suspect gave him details of the slaying.

It was not known when Circuit Judge Ric Howard might rule on the request.

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for the March 2005 slaying of Jessica Lunsford, whose body was found when Couey told authorities where to look near her Homosassa home in central Florida. Couey has pleaded not guilty to the charges of first-degree murder, sexual battery on a child, kidnapping and battery.

Couey is mentioned the most with 4 mentions and would be the most prominent. The next would be the 9-year-old girl: with Jessica Lunsford with 3 mentions. The Prosecutors would be next unnamed with 2 mentions

**\*\*\*We count a mention in a story based on Name (first/last), single personal pronoun, or title reference\*\*\***

**130. charorgroup: Is this a character or a group?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Character
- 1. Group

**131. charobama: Is this character President Obama?**

- 0. Not president Obama
- 1. Character is president Obama

132. ***obamafp***: Does the story highlight Obama's Foreign Policy?  
0. Does not focus on Foreign Policy  
1. Focuses on Foreign Policy
133. ***obamadp***: Does the story highlight Obama's Domestic Policy?  
0. Does not focus on Domestic Policy  
1. Focuses on Domestic Policy
134. ***obamaecon***: Does the story highlight Obama's Economic Policy?  
0. Does not focus on Economic Policy  
1. Focuses on Economic Policy
135. ***obamaintelligent***: Does the story highlight Obama's intelligence?  
0. Does not focus on intelligence  
1. Focuses on intelligence
136. ***obamamistakes***: Does the story highlight Obama's Policy Mistakes?  
0. Does not focus on Policy Mistakes  
1. Focuses on Policy Mistakes
137. ***obamarace***: Does the story explicitly mention Obama's race?  
0. Does not focus on Race  
1. Focuses on Race
138. ***obamastyle***: Does the story Mention Obama's Fashion Sense/Style?  
0. Does not mention on Fashion Sense  
1. Mentions on Fashion Sense
139. ***obamaedu***: Does the story Mention Obama's Education?  
0. Does not mention on Education  
1. Mentions on Education
140. ***obamadad***: Does the story Mention Obama's role as a father?  
0. Does not mention role as a father  
1. Mentions roles as a father
141. ***charmichelle***: Is this character Michelle Obama?  
0. Not Michelle Obama  
1. Character is Michelle Obama
142. ***michelleinterview***: Does the story directly interview Michelle Obama?  
0. Michelle Obama not interviewed directly  
1. Michelle Obama interviewed directly

143. ***michellesecondaryint*: Does the story use secondary quotes from Michelle Obama?**
0. Does not mention use secondary quotes
  1. Relies on Secondary quotes
144. ***michellepolicy*: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's Position on Domestic Policy?**
0. Does not mention on domestic policy position
  1. Mentions on Domestic policy positions
145. ***michellefp*: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's Foreign Policy Position?**
0. Does not mention on Foreign Policy Position
  1. Mentions on Foreign Policy Position
146. ***michellefpjct*: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's First Lady Project?**
0. Does not mention on First Lady Projects
  1. Mentions on First Lady Projects
147. ***michellephysical*: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's Physical Appearance?**
0. Does not mention on Physical Appearance
  1. Mentions on Physical Appearance
148. ***michellebodyref*: What reference is made to Michelle's Physical Appearance?**
0. Does not mention on Appearance
  1. Story mentions her arms
  2. Story mentions her overall fitness
  3. Story mentions her overall beauty
  4. Story mentions her body size/type
  5. Story mentions her smile
  6. Story mentions her hair
  7. Story mentions her skin
149. ***michellestyle*: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's Fashion Sense/Style?**
0. Does not mention on Fashion Sense
  1. Mentions on Fashion Sense
150. ***michelleedu*: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's Education?**
0. Does not mention on Education
  1. Mentions on Education

151. ***michellespt: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's Efforts to Support her Husband?***  
0. Does not mention on Efforts to support husband  
1. Mentions on Efforts to support husband
152. ***michellemom: Does the story Mention Michelle Obama's role as a mother?***  
0. Does not mention on her as a mother  
1. Mentions on her as a mother
153. ***michellerace: Does the story explicitly mention Michelle Obama's race?***  
0. Does not focus on Race  
1. Focuses on Race
154. ***michellegender: Does the story explicitly mention Michelle Obama's gender?***  
0. Does not focus on Gender  
1. Focuses on Gender
155. ***charname: Was this character named or unnamed?***  
RESPONSE OPTIONS:  
0. Unnamed  
1. Named
156. ***charlist: If the character is named, what was their name?***  
RESPONSE OPTIONS:  
(place person's name here) 99 if not applicable
157. ***chardesc: If the character is unnamed, please give a short description?***  
RESPONSE OPTIONS:  
(place person's name here)
158. ***charstereotype: Were stereotypic theme(s) present?***  
RESPONSE OPTIONS:  
0. Stereotypes Not Present  
1. Stereotypes Present
159. ***describestereotype: Describe the stereotypic theme(s) present?***  
RESPONSE OPTIONS:  
Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.
160. ***charcounterstereotype: Were counter stereotypic theme(s) present?***  
RESPONSE OPTIONS:  
0. Stereotypes Not Present  
1. Stereotypes Present

**161.        *describecounterstereotype: Describe the counter stereotypic theme(s) present?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Describe each stereotypic theme that you identified.



### Political Variables: Character

**162.        *charparty: What political party was mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No party mentioned
- 1.        Republican
- 2.        Democrat
- 3.        Green
- 4.        Libertarian
- 5.        Independent/Non-partisan
- 6.        Other party

**163.        *charideology: What political ideology was mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No ideology mentioned
- 1.        Conservative
- 2.        Liberal
- 3.        Progressive
- 4.        Other ideology

### RACE – Character/group

**164.        *charblack: Is this character/group Black?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**165.        *charlatino: Is this character/group Latino?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**166.        *charwhite: Is this character/group White?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**167.        *charasian: Is this character/group Asian?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**168. chararab: Is this character/group Arab/Mid Eastern?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**169. charnative: Is this character/group Native American?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**170. charmultiple: Is this Organization/group comprised of known multiple races (no clear majority)?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**171. charmixed: Is this character/group a Mixed Race person?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**172.charmixedlist: Please List the two most prominent races judged to comprise the mixed race of the person. (Code as 99 if Not Applicable).**

**173. charnorace: Is this character/group's race unable to be determined (no race present)?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**174. charskintone: Did you determine race from skin tone pictured?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**175. charpheno: Did you determine race from Reporter Description of phenotypical race?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**176. charfamily: Did you determine race from Family Association?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. No
- 1. Yes

**177.        *charprior: Did you determine race from Known Race (e.g., Tiger Woods/O.J.)?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**178.        *charfirst: Did you determine race from First Name?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**179.        *charsurname: Did you determine race from Surname?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**180.        *charorganization: Did you determine race from Organization Membership?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

Determining race:

*Explicit race* – In order to be considered an explicit mention, the actual race or some synonym must be present. Any photo is explicit race.

For classifying characters or groups into a racial category, we will be using the US Census Category system, which describes race in the following manner:

White — A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe,. It includes people who indicate their race as “White” or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish. General references to western Russia or Russia in general may be coded as White.

Black or African American — A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “Black, African Am., or Negro,” or provide written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian. In this category you may assume from location of Africa.

American Indian and Alaska Native — A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. It includes people who classify themselves as described below.

Asian — A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. It includes “Asian Indian,” “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “Korean,” “Japanese,” “Vietnamese,” and “Other Asian.” You may assume from mention of Asia and parts of Eastern Russia.

Latino/Latino – For this category, you may infer from location of Central and South America as this is the general perception of the average reader.

These basic guidelines should help serve as a means to enable basic classification of characters on each level.

**Special Note: Only at the Character level is one allowed to infer race from other levels of analysis. Meaning, one may not infer or mark inference of race on Image or Headline level from story or from each other. Also, at each level, mark all inference used for determining race. Example: On Image level, only use image attributes for classifying race and only mark those used on that level. Same for Headline. Yet on the story level, you may use the document as a holistic measure of race and are required to mark all such inferences at the character and group level.**

**Further if a character is coded as mixed racial on any level, please list the two most likely races deemed to represent a mixed race for the character. This will primarily be used on the inference level of prior knowledge.**

**Explicit Mentions:  
Synonyms and Derogatory Slang Words for Blacks, Whites, and Latinos**

<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Latino</b>
African American African (other countries?) Colored Negro (and variations)	Caucasian European American (other countries?) Pale	Latino/Latina Mexican (other countries?) Spic Wetback

If you are able to determine the race of the character in any way other than the above *explicit* mentions, code the characters race as being *inferred*. You should use any means possible to determine race.

Potential ways to infer a character/group’s race:

Reporters Descriptions – Caucasian male  
Famous Individual – Tiger Woods, Whitney Houston, Oprah  
Surname – Martinez, Guerrero  
Family Association – Infer from a family member with a known race  
First Name – Molik, Juan, Tyronne  
(more?)

EXAMPLES:

*What counts as a mention of race?*

Explicit mention of both the White and the Black characters-

“In that case as well, it was an African-American man convicted of killing a white farming couple.”

Implicit mention of a Latino character-

“Guerrero’s lawyer decided that the best defense of these accusations would be to...”

Implicit mention of Black character-

“The house where US Secretary of State Colin Powell’s father, Luther, spent his early years...”

*What does **NOT** count as a mention of race (Unable to determine race/Not Applicable)?*

We cannot determine the race of this individual-

“Mr. Harrison, who had just recently moved here from South Africa, was found guilty of...”

**GENDER – Character**

**181.      *charfemale: Was this character female?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.      No
- 1.      Yes

**182.      *charmale: Was this character male?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.      No
- 1.      Yes

### Determining gender:

Determining gender can be inferred or explicit. If the gender of a character is mentioned explicitly, it will usually be mentioned specifically by the author (see table for marking words for explicit and Implicit gender reference). Many times gender will have to be inferred by the coder. This can be based on the name of an individual.

*Explicit* – photo and personal pronouns are explicit mentions of gender.

Explicit	Inferred
Man	Donald
Woman	Rosie
Girl	Simon
Boy	Paula
Grandfather	Randy
Mother	NBA Point Guard
Grandmother	NFL Great
Father	Member of the LPGA
Son	
Daughter	
Mr.	
Mrs.	
Ms.	
Proper Pronoun Use (He/She)	

### EXAMPLES of Explicit

“She said, “You simply don’t know when you do any kind of rational assessment as to whether or not it is worth paying for, because it is expensive, and the older you get, the more expensive it is” (Markley, *Houston Chronicle*, 1/15).”

“One suspect was described as a white male, 30 to 33 years old, with black hair, dark eyes, dark complexion, thin build and wearing a black work jacket with white letters. He was said to be 5 feet 5 inches tall.”

“She said detectives learned in interviews with the men that Rodreick convinced Stiffler and Snow that he was a boy after meeting him two years ago over the Internet. Rodreick apparently shaved his body hair and used makeup to keep up the guise.”

### Examples of Inferred

“Robert James Snow, 43, “were very upset when the detectives told them they had been having a sexual relationship”

“A state judge has ordered O.J. Simpson to limit his spending to “ordinary and necessary living expenses” after the family of murder victim Ron Goldman raised concerns the former football star was shopping another book deal.”

“U.S. President George Bush plans to travel to Williamsburg, Va., to speak at the House Democrats’ annual issues conference. Bush previously addressed the Democratic retreat in 2001, his first year in office, The New York Times reported. Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, chairman of the House”

### **AGE – Character/group**

**183.        *charchild: Was there a child portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**184.        *charteen: Was there a teen portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**185.        *charadult: Was there an Adult Portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

**186.        *charsenior: Was there a Senior Portrayed?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        No
- 1.        Yes

Determining age:

*Explicit mention of age* – Anytime a person’s age is explicitly stated, code as being present by indicating the age that was mentioned. Age ranges are 0-12 = Child, 13-17 = Teen, 18-49 = Adult, 50 and over = Senior.

**Rule of thumb is use age at time of publication not if multiple ages for the same character are referenced. Code the character’s age as the age as described by the reporter, latest age when deceased.**

*Implicit mention of age* – A person’s age Did also be inferred. If a person’s can be determined from group membership, or some other indirect manner, code age as being present by indicating the age that Did be inferred.

## EXAMPLES:

### Explicit mention of age-

“How Did anyone — let alone a 9-year-old — talk their way onto a flight without a reservation in the post-9/11 era? That’s what federal and airline officials have been scrambling to figure out since Semaj Booker made his improbable journey from Washington state to Texas. .”

“A charter school alerted authorities to a 29-year-old sex offender who tried to enroll there, pretending he was just 12, in what sheriff’s officials said Friday may have been an attempt to lure children into sexual abuse.”

“Sarah Dickerson, 26, now of Morton, is charged with five counts of criminal sexual assault. She pleaded innocent previously, but she is expected to enter a new plea on Feb. 8 as part of an agreement with prosecutors.”

### Implicit Mention of Age

Sometimes a person or groups age can be inferred in a headline. Using the categories as in the image, code for age (age may be inferred from group membership as in AARP) Ex. AARP battles for prescription medication bill; Elderly man dies on subway today; Today’s youth not interested in sex: studies show; Men in 40s experience greater heart attacks less a study shows. . .

### Examples of Implicit Mention

“TEENAGERS are more likely to take their teacher’s advice on their next CD than on sex. So why not train teens to teach their peers about the dangers of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy? Nice idea – but it doesn’t always work.”

“Numerous items were stolen Wednesday from an elderly resident in the 800 block of Gephart Drive when two suspects entered to talk with the victim about “tree removal and replacement of a sewer line,” Cumberland Police said.”

“Virginia lawmakers are proposing legislation to require middle school-age girls to be vaccinated against a sexually transmitted virus that causes cervical cancer.”

“State and federal officials have begun an educational campaign called “Own Your Future,” which seeks to encourage baby boomers to invest in their long-term care costs, “especially when many are convinced that government-subsidized programs will take care of their needs,” the *Houston Chronicle* reports.”



**187. charges: What was this character/group's Socio Economic Status?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Poor
- 1. Middle Class
- 2. Upper Class
- 99. No information about class

**Always code SES as Last mentioned or Living Status of an Individual (e.g., You would code a story about Oprah's life based on her current or last status).**

Both explicit and implicit references will be coded. Explicit references include direct references to "poor," "middle class," or "upper class." Implicit references include the use of synonyms of each of these categories. This list is not all-inclusive. Class is not limited to these adjectives. Class can also be inferred if the person is famous or by profession, etc...

**Examples of Implicit Mentions:  
Synonyms for Poor, Middle Class, and Upper Class**

Poor	Middle Class	Upper Class
Bankrupt, beggarly, broke, impoverished, needy, penniless, poverty-stricken, underprivileged	Bourgeois, educated class, Middle America, middle-income group, proletariat, working class, wage-earners	Wealthy, opulent, affluent, prosperous, rich, upscale, well-to-do, privileged, aristocracy, elite

EXAMPLES:

*What counts as a mention of class?*

Explicit mention of Middle Class-

"The exodus of middle-class night life — even concerts and bars — to glittering shopping malls in Rio probably reflects security concerns as much as it does creeping Americanization."

Implicit mention of a Upper Class-

"Lowder is a wealthy booster and power broker."

*What does **NOT** count as a mention of class (No information about class)?*

No mention of class-

"...in a black neighborhood tormented by crime..."

**188. charbody: What was the body type described in the story for this character/group?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

1. Anorexic
2. Thin but healthy
3. Average
4. Overweight but healthy
5. Obese
99. Not mentioned/Does not apply

**189. charathlete: Was the body type portrayed athletic?**

0. Not Athletic
1. Athletic
99. Not Applicable

**At the Character Level, body type may be inferred from headline, story or headline levels. You may also make inference based on occupation such as athlete, reference to making exercise videos, etc.**

References to this category will be rare. Code both explicit references to each of the response options as well as implicit synonyms for each category. This list is not all-inclusive.

Make sure that the character's body type is being referenced before assuming that it is a reference to body weight. For example, do not assume that the following would be coded as average body weight: "Joe is a normal boy from the south side of Chicago."

**Examples of Implicit Mentions:  
Synonyms for Anorexic, Thin, Average, Overweight, and Obese**

<b>Anorexic</b>	<b>Thin</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Overweight</b>	<b>Obese</b>
Bony, gaunt, puny, skeletal, starved, undernourished, underweight	Lanky, lean, skinny, slender, small	Normal, healthy, typical size, common, ordinary	Fat, heavy, large, plump, portly, tubby, weighty, ample, chubby, hefty, big	Huge, blimp, whale, outsized, corpulent

EXAMPLES:

*What counts as a mention of body type?*

Explicit mention of Obese-

"Obese women who become pregnant face..."

“Slender, reedlike, willowy and delicate, she is a ballerina whose greatest allure may well be her onstage poetry.”

What does **NOT** count as a mention of body type (Not mentioned/Does not apply)?

No mention of body type-

“We would like to get a scoring perimeter guy (to fill the void left by Gordon's decision).”

**190. vicrchar: Was the Character/group portrayed as a victim of racial harassment?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Not portrayed as a victim of racial harassment
- 1. Portrayed as a victim of racial harassment

**191. perprchar: Was the Character/group portrayed as a perpetrator of racial harassment?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Not portrayed as a perpetrator of racial harassment
- 1. Portrayed as a perpetrator of racial harassment

**192. vicsexhar: Was the Character/group portrayed as a victim of sexual harassment?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Not portrayed as a victim of sexual harassment
- 1. Portrayed as a victim of sexual harassment

**193. perpsexhar: Was the Character/group portrayed as a perpetrator of sexual harassment?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Not portrayed as a perpetrator of sexual harassment
- 1. Portrayed as a perpetrator of sexual harassment

### **CRIME/TERROR - Character/group**

**194. terror: Was terrorism mentioned in reference to this character/group?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0. Terrorism was not mentioned
- 1. Terrorism was mentioned

Explicit mention of terrorism -

“He avoided mention of any specific religion, even as he decried terrorism and the ‘disturbing conflicts across the Middle East.’”

Implicit mention of terrorism -

“‘There's a lot of sectarian violence taking place, fomented in my opinion because of the attacks by al Qaeda, causing people to seek reprisal,’ he said.”

**195.        *crime: Was there mention of crime in reference to this character/group?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Crime was not mentioned
- 1.        Crime was mentioned

Mention of crime and mention of victim -

**“Mayor Michael Bloomberg met Tuesday with the family of the man who was killed on his wedding day in a barrage of police gunfire as he left his bachelor party.”**

**196.        *victim: Was this character/group portrayed as a victim?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Not a Victim
- 1.        Victim

**197.        *perpetrator: Was this character/group portrayed as a perpetrator?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Not a Perpetrator
- 1.        Perpetrator

Mention of crime and mention of victim -

**“Mayor Michael Bloomberg met Tuesday with the family of the man who was killed on his wedding day in a barrage of police gunfire as he left his bachelor party.”**

Mention of crime and mention of perpetrator -

“One of Bollywood’s biggest stars, Sanjay Dutt, was convicted today of illegally possessing weapons.”

**\*\*Question: Is Kathryn victim or perpetrator?**

“Kathryn Johnston was killed Nov. 21 when she fired at undercover narcotics agents who had obtained a "no-knock" search warrant for her home after telling a judge that a confidential informant had bought drugs there earlier in the day.”

**198.        *violence: Was violence present in reference to this character/group?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- 0.        Violence not present
- 1.        Violence present

Mention of violence -

“The suffocation was caused by hands blocking the boy's mouth, as well as the ‘forced inhalation of ammonia fumes’ that caused his vocal cords to spasm, blocking his airway.”

### Determining Culpability of Character/group

In some stories, the author will portray a character in such a way as to identify a character as responsible for some act and deserving of punishment as a result. The purpose of this variable is to determine if authors are attributing culpability to a character. When attempting to assess culpability, look for markers that might point to whether the author is portraying a character in such a manner. Such judgment calls must go beyond simply attributing a failure to a character and must imply that the character should receive some level of punishment. This will be most applicable in areas of criminal stories.

Culpability Reference by Author
Suspected
Allegedly
Responsible
Out of Control
Murdered
Caused

#### Examples of Culpability in Stories:

“Turkish police detained a 17-year-old male suspected of murdering journalist Hrant Dink, one of Turkey’s most prominent ethnic Armenians, whose slaying sent shock waves through the country.”

“...a Young man shot and killed six white hunters there.”

“A total of four men were in custody in the case Friday on various charges, including fraud, forgery, identity theft, and failure to register as a sex offender.”

The Navy announced Friday it relieved the commander of a nuclear submarine that was involved in an incident that killed two sailors.

**199.        *culpable: Was the character/group portrayed as culpable?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0.        Author of story does not portray character/group as culpable
- 1.        Author portrays character/group as culpable
- 99.      Not applicable/Does not apply

## CLASSIFICATION OF CRIME

This analysis uses the FBI's/UCR definition of crime where White Collar crime is: The Federal Bureau of Investigation has opted to approach white-collar crime in terms of the offense. The Bureau has defined white-collar crime as "... those illegal acts which are characterized by deceit, concealment, or violation of trust and which are not dependent upon the application or threat of physical force or violence. Individuals and organizations commit these acts to obtain money, property, or services; to avoid the payment or loss of money or services; or to secure personal or business advantage." (USDOL, 1989, p. 3.)

Accordingly, we will be using the following four categories for White Collar Crime:  
Embezzlement, Fraud, Bribery and Counterfeiting/Forgery.

We will also be using an abbreviated version of the FBI/UCR classification for other crime, which are collapsed into the following categories: Assault, Arson, Child Abuse, Burglary, Conspiracy, Drug Possession, Murder, Attempted Murder, Harassment, Prostitution and Weapons Violations.

**200.        *embezzle: Was the crime committed Embezzlement?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Embezzlement
- 1.        Embezzlement

**201.        *fraud: Was the Crime Committed Fraud?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Fraud
- 1.        Fraud

**202.        *bribery: Was the Crime Committed Bribery?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Bribery
- 1.        Bribery

**203.        *forgery: Was the Crime Committed Counterfeiting/Forgery?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Counterfeiting/Forgery?
- 1.        Counterfeiting/Forgery?

**204.        *assault: Was the Crime Committed Assault?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Assault
- 1.        Assault

**205.        *arson: Was the Crime Committed Arson?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Arson
- 1.        Arson

**206.        *childabuse: Was the Crime Committed Child Abuse?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Child Abuse
- 1.        Child Abuse

**207.        *burglar: Was the Crime Committed Burglary?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Burglary
- 1.        Burglary

**208.        *conspiracy: Was the Crime Committed Conspiracy?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Conspiracy
- 1.        Conspiracy

**209.        *drugpossess: Was the Crime Committed Drug Possession?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Drug Possession
- 1.        Drug Possession

**210.        *murder: Was the Crime Committed Murder?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Murder
- 1.        Murder

**211.        *attemptmurder: Was the Crime Committed Attempted Murder?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Attempted Murder
- 1.        Attempted Murder

**212.        *harass: Was the Crime Committed Harassment?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Harassment
- 1.        Harassment

**213.        *prostitute: Was the Crime Committed Prostitution?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not Prostitution
- 1.        Prostitution

**214.        *weapons: Was the Crime Committed A Weapons Violation?***

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 0.        Not A Weapons Violation
- 1.        Weapons Violation

**DRUGS/ALCOHOL - Character/group**

**215.        *drugs: Were drugs mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0.        Drugs not mentioned
- 1.        Drugs mentioned

**Mention of drugs -**

**“A former sheriff pleaded not guilty Monday to federal charges that he took part in a scheme to sell drugs seized from criminals along with 12 former and current officers.”**

**216.        *alcohol: Was alcohol mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0.        Alcohol not mentioned
- 1.        Alcohol mentioned

**Mention of alcohol -**

**“On February 17, he pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of drunken driving.”**

**IMMIGRATION - Character/group**

**217.        *immigration: Was immigration mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0.        Immigration was not mentioned
- 1.        Immigration was mentioned

**Mention of immigration -**

**“The two, believed to be illegal immigrants themselves, were held on suspicion of harboring illegal immigrants.”**

**218.        *welfare: Was welfare mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0.        Welfare was not mentioned
- 1.        Welfare was mentioned

**219.        *healthcare: Was healthcare mentioned in reference to this character/group?***

**RESPONSE OPTIONS:**

- 0.        healthcare was not mentioned
- 1.        healthcare was mentioned